

School of Theology at Claremont



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# HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT METHODISM

JAMES VICKERS

INDEPENDENT METHODIST BOOKROOM

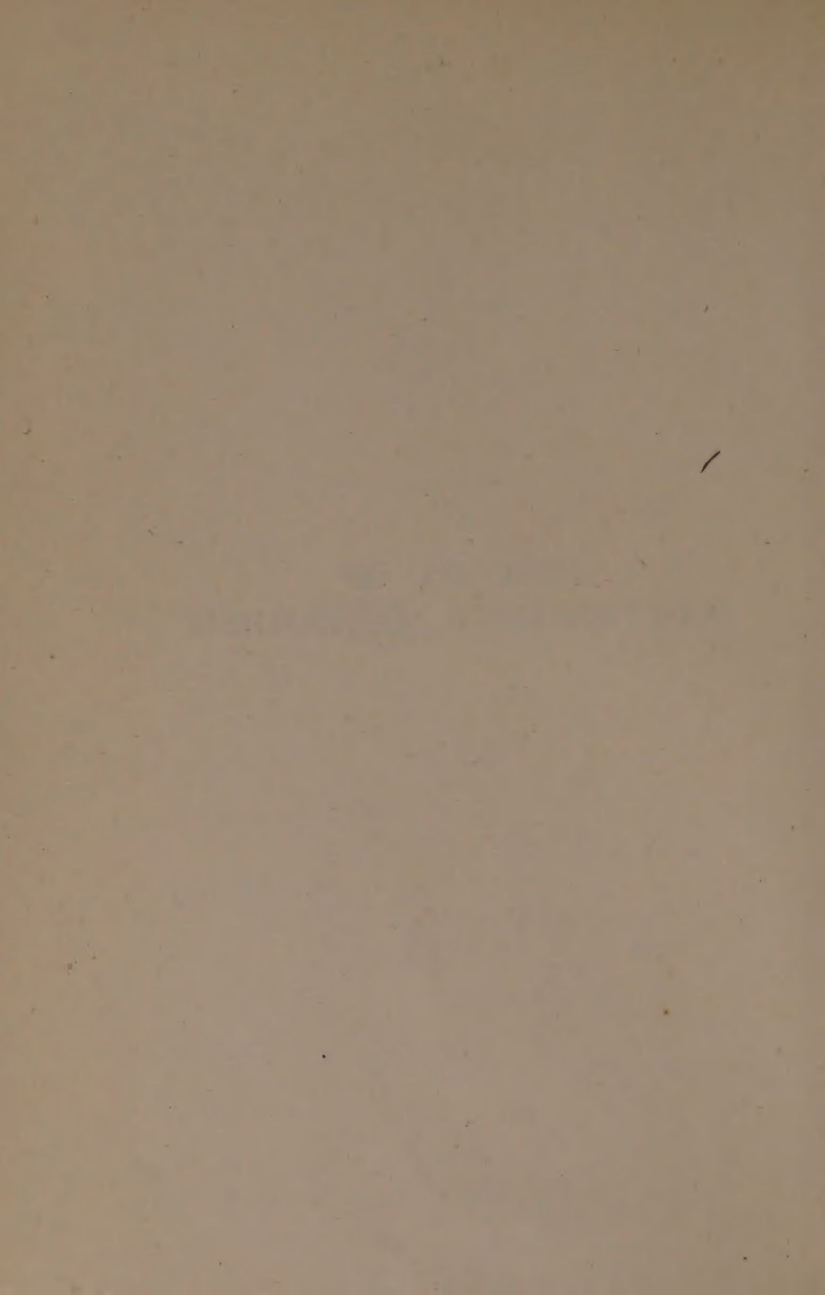








**HISTORY OF  
INDEPENDENT METHODISM**



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# HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT METHODISM

SKETCHES OF WORTHIES  
ORIGINS OF CIRCUITS  
EXPOSITIONS OF PRINCIPLES AND POLITY

BY  
JAMES VICKERS

INDEPENDENT METHODIST BOOKROOM

1920

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## PREFACE

A HISTORY of Independent Methodism has often been called for, and the writer has been encouraged to offer in a compact form what may serve until a more amplified history is undertaken. Our Souvenir of the Connexion Centenary in 1906, in which the writer collaborated, presented very briefly the origin of each Church, and gave an outline of the evolution of the Connexion. This volume has a wider scope, and embodies historical facts which were not at that period available. Grouping together the sketches of four principal builders of the Connexion will help to throw light on our early history and subsequent growth. The origin of each Circuit is narrated, and with the narrative are combined sketches of circuit notabilities who won a position of influence in their own circuits and the wider circle of the Churches generally. They are rightly acclaimed as Independent Methodist worthies. The selection of others for notice has been limited to those who have held Connexional positions, and thus many, who in a less conspicuous way have won an honourable place, are reluctantly left unnoticed. It will be seen that the writer has striven to limit himself to the presentation of facts, and the references to those who are living are very cursory.

It is considered, too, that the writer's exposition of our distinctive principles as a denomination, which in

a fugitive form have already been circulated, should have a place in this volume.

If the photo-blocks could have been prepared originally for this volume a higher standard of artistic excellence might have been reached, but such photographic reproductions as they are serve to remind us of men whose work is still revered.

I gratefully acknowledge the information given in Arthur Mounfield's papers on Peter Phillips and the history of Friars' Green Church.

JAMES VICKERS.

*Bolton, 1920.*

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

	PAGE
A GLIMPSE OF THE ENGLAND OF OUR ANCESTORS	1

## CHAPTER II

MINISTERIAL SUPREMACY AND THE METHODIST DIVISIONS . . . . .	4
--	---

## CHAPTER III

OUR EARLIEST CONFERENCE: ORIGINS OF FIRST CHURCHES . . . . .	8
---	---

## CHAPTER IV

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY . . . . .	17
-----------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER V

FOUR BUILDERS OF THE CONNEXION: PETER PHILLIPS, ALEXANDER DENOVAN, WILLIAM SANDERSON, WILLIAM BRIMELOW . . . .	23
--	----

## CHAPTER VI

	PAGE
DEVELOPMENT OF CONNEXIONAL ORGANISATION	62

## CHAPTER VII

LEGAL STATUS OF OUR MINISTRY . . . .	69
--------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER VIII

ANNUAL MEETING GROUP, 1874 . . . .	72
------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER IX

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRY . . . . .	74
--	----

## CHAPTER X

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ORGANISATION . . . .	82
---	----

## CHAPTER XI

AN UNPAID MINISTRY: ITS DEFENCE BY THE APOSTLE PAUL . . . . .	86
--	----

## CHAPTER XII

A MISSIONARY MINISTRY . . . . .	96
---------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XIII

ADVANTAGES OF AN UNPAID MINISTRY . . . .	110
--	-----



# CONTENTS

ix

## CHAPTER XIV

PAGE

CIRCUIT ORIGINS AND WORTHIES : MANCHESTER, WARRINGTON, OLDHAM, BOLTON, WIGAN, LIVERPOOL, CLECKHEATON, COLNE AND NEL- SON, SOUTHPORT, SHAVINGTON, NORTHERN CONFEDERATION, BRISTOL, BINGHAM . . .	131
---	-----

## CHAPTER XV

PRESIDENTS OF CONFERENCE : REFERENCES TO FORTY-TWO . . . . .	207
---	-----

## CHAPTER XVI

CONNEXIONAL SECRETARIES : REFERENCES TO FORTY-FOUR . . . . .	247
---	-----

## CHAPTER XVII

CONNEXIONAL TREASURERS, AUDITORS, AND FINANCE SECRETARIES . . . . .	265
--	-----

## CHAPTER XVIII

DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARIES . . . . .	269
------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIX

THE MAGAZINE AND ITS EDITORS . . . . .	271
--	-----

## CHAPTER XX

GROWTH OF BOOKROOM DEPARTMENT AND LIST OF SECRETARIES . . . . .	278
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXI

	PAGE
EVANGELISTS : J. SEDDON, J. KNOWLES, J. BIRCHALL, T. COOKE, R. BERRY, R. LEE, M. KENNEDY, R. B. WOODS, CLARA GREEN, T. E. COOK, J. HARGREAVES, R. RIMMER, MRS. KNIGHT ( <i>née</i> NINA BAILEY), A. FOREMAN . . . . .	291

## CHAPTER XXII

FOREIGN MISSION WORK : FIRST MISSIONARIES (DR. AND MRS. ROBINSON). OUR CONNECTION WITH ROBERT MOFFATT . . .	308
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXIII

OUR FIRST MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT . . .	311
--------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XXIV

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT : THE PIONEER TEMPERANCE SOCIETY . . . . .	314
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	317

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
LORENZO DOW . . . . .	9
PETER PHILLIPS . . . . .	25
HANNAH PHILLIPS . . . . .	30
ALEXANDER DENOVAN . . . . .	35
HANDWRITING OF DENOVAN AT 81 . . . . .	42
WILLIAM SANDERSON . . . . .	43
SANDERSON'S WRITING IN HIS DIARY . . . . .	53
WILLIAM BRIMELOW . . . . .	56
ANNUAL MEETING GROUP, 1874 . . . . .	<i>facing</i> 72
THOMAS OXLEY . . . . .	133
JOHN KNOWLES . . . . .	137
JOHN NIELD . . . . .	142
JAMES FIRTH . . . . .	145
JOSHUA HUDLASS . . . . .	149
JAMES TRICKETT . . . . .	153
JOSEPH TRICKETT . . . . .	157
JAMES PROE . . . . .	158
WILLIAM BOOTE . . . . .	161
JOSEPH SPENCER . . . . .	164
AMOS SPENCER . . . . .	167
JOHN POLLARD . . . . .	171
JOHN LANDLESS . . . . .	173
JAMES HOLT . . . . .	176
THOMAS FOULDS . . . . .	178
RICHARD SPENCER . . . . .	181
MATTHEW DARLINGTON . . . . .	184
WILLIAM BRANFOOT . . . . .	191
ROBERT HOPE . . . . .	195
JAMES PLUCKNETT . . . . .	199
THOMAS WALKER . . . . .	202
WILLIAM CASTLEDINE . . . . .	204
EDWARD TWISS . . . . .	217
WILLIAM CRUMBLEHULME . . . . .	220
THOMAS WORTHINGTON . . . . .	222

	PAGE
BENJAMIN DYSON . . . . .	224
JOHN CRUMBLEHULME . . . . .	225
ARTHUR WATSON . . . . .	228
GEORGE HUNTER . . . . .	231
ROBERT WATSON COLLIN . . . . .	233
W. H. RIDING . . . . .	234
ELLIS BARKER . . . . .	236
WILL PRICE . . . . .	238
JOHN WRIGHT JOHNSON . . . . .	239
EDWARD RALPHS . . . . .	241
EDWARD EMBLETON . . . . .	242
ROBERT HENSHALL . . . . .	244
WILLIAM OXLEY . . . . .	251
JAMES VICKERS . . . . .	253
JASPER ISTERLING . . . . .	254
WILLIAM WRIGHT . . . . .	255
JOHN WILD . . . . .	257
ROBINSON FOULDS . . . . .	258
FREDERICK WILKINSON . . . . .	259
JAMES VICKERS . . . . .	261
SILAS COOKE . . . . .	266
J. F. WOOD . . . . .	267
HARTLEY BARRETT . . . . .	268
RICHARD BRIMELOW . . . . .	274
ROBERT ENTWISTLE . . . . .	281
JOSEPH SETTLE . . . . .	283
ALFRED ROSCOE . . . . .	285
DANIEL HOWARTH . . . . .	287
JOHN BATTERSBY . . . . .	289
JAMES SEDDON . . . . .	293
JOSEPH BIRCHALL . . . . .	295
THOMAS COOKE . . . . .	297
ROBERT BERRY . . . . .	298
RICHARD LEE . . . . .	300
MATTHEW KENNEDY . . . . .	302
RICHARD BORROWS WOODS . . . . .	305
SISTER CLARA GREEN . . . . .	306
JOSEPH AND JESSIE ROBINSON . . . . .	309
SIR THOMAS ROBINSON, M.P. . . . .	312

# HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT METHODISM

## CHAPTER I

### A GLIMPSE OF THE ENGLAND OF OUR ANCESTORS

THE Independent Methodist Church is a Church which moulds itself upon the apostolic pattern. Its validity is based on the New Testament Church. Therefore, it places first what the New Testament teaches : the writings of the Christian Fathers, with us, take a very subordinate place. But, though a New Testament Church, it has a modern title. Why it has that title will be our first inquiry.

Two hundred years ago there were no Churches which bore the name of Methodist. To-day there are millions of Methodists, and numerically they dwarf the Episcopal Church of England, of which John Wesley was a member. It is calculated that Methodism has now thirty million of adherents. In fact, Methodists form the greatest body of Protestants in the world. It is not necessary to tell the wonderful story of John Wesley's life and labours. "The world is my parish," said Wesley ; but when he died in 1791 he only dimly saw the extent of it. England was well

known to him : he traversed it again and again. Few possess the historic imagination which visualises the England he essayed to evangelise. What wonderful changes have taken place since Wesley ceased his untiring activity ! Looking back we see that the Industrial Revolution, which created vast centres of population, had then to develop. What are now the common amenities of a wage-earner's life were then undreamt of. There were no railways, no telegraphs, and no penny postal service, no compulsory elementary education, no democratic electorate. Ships had to wait on wind and tide. Newspapers were few and costly. Very few poor people were educated, and the amusements of the people, both of high and low degree, were on a low level. The temperance reformer had yet to appear, and the freedom of the slave had not been won. Neither had the abominable penal laws been abolished. Nonconformists were under a legal ban and were subject to religious disabilities. Methodist preachers were becoming tolerated, but they had to obtain a magistrate's licence to protect them from molestation in their work. Even Methodist chapels had to be legally licensed by a bishop. When Wesley closed his eyes in death Sunday Schools were just entering upon their beneficent course. Seventy years had then to run before a real attempt was made to make the rudiments of education accessible to every child. The toiler's lot was hard and his wages small ; poverty was familiar in the poor man's dwelling.

In such a period ideas were naturally fermenting in men's minds. Tom Paine had published his *Rights of Man*. France was passing through the throes of the Revolution. America in its Declaration of Independence had proclaimed : "That all men are created equal ;

that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Happily, Methodism had for a generation been a potent influence in the life of this country. In village and town the Gospel had been preached, and people stirred to think and pray, to meet together for the building up of spiritual life. A vision of the Kingdom of God had come to hitherto neglected multitudes. John Wesley had travelled again and again through England, making converts. His itinerant preachers also made periodical visits to the Societies he formed, but much was necessarily left to voluntary and zealous effort. Moreover, there was enlightenment as to the right of religious societies to govern their own affairs. Then a crisis in Methodism came from which our denomination ultimately emerged.

## CHAPTER II

### MINISTERIAL SUPREMACY AND THE METHODIST DIVISIONS

WHEN Wesley died it was discovered that there was a prevalent desire among "the people called Methodists" for more self-government and a fuller expression of the Societies' life. Wesley's paternal autocracy had been on the whole accepted, but the assumption of that autocracy by the Methodist travelling preachers was challenged. There was severe controversy. Out of it came this: the itinerant (travelling or circuit) preachers settled that there should be equality among themselves; none should be called Reverend, and the wearing of ruffles and gowns was prohibited. Only itinerant preachers should be members of Conference, and they should appoint preachers to Circuits. The clamant demands of the Societies were met by the provision that the itinerants should conduct the Lord's Supper and baptize children if the Societies so desired. Thus far was the desire of the Societies met. But the preachers were firm in asserting their ministerial supremacy. They claimed that John Wesley's personal authority should be theirs collectively. None can understand the history of Methodism without remembering this



fact and its baneful results. Dr. Smith, the historian of Methodism, tells us :

“ By bequeathing to the ministers constituting the Legal Hundred the power of appointing preachers to Methodist chapels, etc., Wesley undoubtedly constituted the ministers the permanent and supreme authority in Methodism. The scriptural idea of a Church is evidently a unity of clergy and laity working together for the general good, with an ultimate authority and responsibility resting upon the ministry. The degrading and democratic notion that a minister is paid by the people, and is therefore the servant of the people, and must be appointed by the people, had no place in the Churches founded by the Apostles and reared under their guidance.”

It is amazing to see now how limited Dr. Smith's knowledge was of the Church in apostolic days.

In 1791 Methodism was one compact body, but in the next sixty years in England alone it had split up into seven separate bodies. In 1797 the Methodist New Connexion seceded, in 1805 the Independent Methodist Connexion was formed, in 1807 the Primitive Methodist body began its career, in 1815 the Bible Christians originated, and in 1849 the United Methodist Free Church and the Wesleyan Reform Union began, and ministerial supremacy in each instance was the disintegrating cause : it was the dynamite which caused explosions. Only after the withdrawal or expulsion of 100,000 members from the Wesleyan body in 1849-51 did the Wesleyan Conference begin to modify the powers of its ministers. Those whom the Wesleyans term “laymen” were eventually admitted into Conference, and in course of time the Wesleyan Societies were by Conference resolution constituted Churches, the members being given very limited powers.

Here it may be stated, that for four decades precedent to 1849 the most forceful figure in Methodism was Jabez Bunting. During a challenging incident he declared: "Methodism knows nothing whatever of Democracy: it is as much opposed to Democracy as it is to sin."<sup>1</sup> To him is assigned the affixing of the title "Rev." to each minister's name, thus reversing the resolution of one of the early Conferences, which declared that no ministers should be called Reverend.

It was against such claims and such a spirit that those who formed our denomination felt they had to make a stand. There was no division as to the essential doctrines of the Gospel, but an assertion of what constituted a Church and its powers and rights. Ministerial supremacy caused the birth of our denomination, and it has been, again and again, the cause of Churches joining our ranks. The history of our circuit origins, given in later pages, demonstrates this. Even in Wesley's days Societies resisted his autocracy. It was inevitable that as Wesley, led by the Spirit, set aside ecclesiastical authority, those who were won by his agency also felt that they had a call and right to personal investigation and action. There was one John Bennett, an intimate associate of Wesley, who devoted himself for a season to some "Independent Methodist" churches in Lancashire.<sup>2</sup> They formed a group which seceded from the Wesleyan Society in Bolton, but did not take permanent root. Possibly, however, in them may be found the origin of our title in later days. At intervals other Methodist Societies existed independently, and it is therefore not

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Developments in Methodism*, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Rigg's *Jabez Bunting*, p. 14.

surprising that, when Wesley died, groups of Methodists established or continued Societies in which freedom from ministerial control could be enjoyed. It was a period of unsettlement and the path of freedom opened to many.

## CHAPTER III

### OUR EARLIEST CONFERENCE : ORIGINS OF FIRST CHURCHES

**W**E now come to our earliest Conference. In the early days of the nineteenth century, among the self-governed groups alluded to were the Quaker Methodists of Warrington, the Camp Meeting Methodists (afterwards a nucleus of the Primitive Methodists), the Revivalists of Leeds, the Tent Methodists of Bristol and Manchester, the Magic Methodists of Delamere Forest, the Bandroom Methodists of Manchester, and the Independent Methodists of Oldham. These various groups became acquainted with each other, and their preachers interchanged pulpits. Lorenzo Dow, an American evangelist of singular power, travelled among them in 1805, and was an influencing force for unity. There was a great revival in 1806 in which he was a prominent figure, and the Societies in and about Manchester became more closely associated. Peter Phillips, who welcomed Lorenzo to his home, united with him in his mission work. So did Hugh Bourne, a lifelong personal friend of Phillips, and subsequently one of the founders of Primitive Methodism. Proposals for a formal union of these independent Societies took place in 1805, and in that year a representative meeting was held in Manchester. Another

meeting followed in 1806, but no records of either meeting are extant. We date our origin from 1805, the year when the association of our earliest Churches commenced. There is, fortunately, documentary evidence of the third Conference in 1807. It was held at Macclesfield, and Hugh Bourne records in his diary that he was present. He was then undecided as to the future of the Societies coming into existence under his fostering care. He tells us that he had a conference with some Quakers with whom the Independent Methodist brethren were on friendly terms; but, whilst attracted by their



LORENZO DOW.

spirit, he shrank from their polity. Peter Phillips, on the other hand, found himself in affinity with them, and so it came about that when Bourne decided for a paid ministry the lives of Phillips and Bourne to a great degree lay apart.

In 1808 the fourth Conference was held, again at Macclesfield, and from that year there are printed data. It is clear, from the printed record of this 1808 Conference, that the gathering was principally con-

cerned in promoting intercourse between Societies which had not the same designations, but had common aims. All the Societies were dominated by their ideas of self-government, and were determined that no union should interfere with that. Whilst they were Methodists in doctrine and in methods of organisation, they held that the Church, a society of believers, was the source of authority. To them the Church was higher than Conference. The five Societies represented were Macclesfield, Manchester, Warrington, Stockport, and Oldham. There is a tradition that at the first Conference the precedence of Churches was decided by ballot. Otherwise Warrington would have been first, as it dated from 1796. How the title of Independent Methodist was agreed upon can only be conjectured. The Oldham Society had adopted that title, but the Manchester Society called itself Methodist Independent. The Oldham title was certainly more euphonious. But, taking the Churches in the order printed, we find that Macclesfield reported 398 members, Manchester 493, Warrington 187, Stockport 63, and Oldham 78; in all, 1,219. In connection with the first three Churches were missions, but they all have passed away except Stockton Heath and Lymm. Each Church had two representatives, so ten members formed the gathering, of which Richard Harrison, of Warrington, was elected President and Thomas Gregory, of Macclesfield, Secretary. Mention was made of twenty-seven preachers, and from other sources we learn that only two Churches, Macclesfield and Warrington, had then erected buildings.

The origin of the five Churches named can be briefly indicated,

The *Macclesfield* group arose through a severance from societies in the then recently constituted Wesleyan New Connexion, which arose out of the agitation led by Alexander Kilham. They shared to the full Kilham's desire for freedom, but the organisation shaped by him, though having democratic features, did not fully satisfy their zeal for revivalism, with its moods and methods swayed by the Spirit. The New Connexion, therefore, did not retain them, and they ran well for a time, but eventually yielded to the attractions of a settled paid ministry.

*Manchester* Church, with its missions, were groups of men and women who were much attached to Band Meetings—very useful agencies long recognised in Wesleyan Methodism. Those who were members of these Bands held open-air meetings, gathered converts into fellowship, and the members of the fellowship joined in prayer, praise, and mutual exhortations, also giving narratives of personal salvation and Christian experience. These Bands had a somewhat loose bond of union with the established Wesleyan societies in Manchester, and the itinerant preachers visited them. Indeed, Jabez Bunting preached his trial sermon at a Band meeting service. At this period there was a tendency in the Wesleyan Conference to secure more "ordered" Churches; hence attempts were made to regulate the Band Meetings. These attempts were resisted, the Band Meetings would not be regulated, and eventually, in 1806, the Wesleyan Societies ceased to recognise them. This, however, did not disturb them, and they went on their way as Methodist Independents.

*Warrington* Church and its missions also had the revival spirit, but with two definite objectives: self-

government and a New Testament ministry. The origin of Warrington Church, our oldest Church, was simple. The original members of the Church, as Wesleyan Methodists, worshipped at Bank Street Wesleyan chapel, which was under the supervision of Northwich Circuit, and the superintendent minister who resided at the circuit town occasionally paid them visits. They were, however, left much to their own devices, and on one occasion suggested to the circuit authorities that they should be without an itinerant minister, with his consequent visits and their responsibility for his financial maintenance. Amongst the activities of the community were cottage meetings. The visiting itinerant minister, probably with the desire that all the efforts of the Society should centre in the chapel, insisted that these meetings should cease. The local preachers, and those who upheld them, on their part resisted this injunction and carried on the meetings. There was at the time, as already indicated, general unrest in regard to the government of the Wesleyan body. The defence of these cottage meetings brought to a focus the ideas of self-government germinating in the minds of those who were associated with them. Much discussion took place, and those who conducted the cottage meetings decided for freedom of action. Therefore, in 1796, five years after John Wesley's death, they formed a distinct Society in a grocer's shop in Bridge Street, which still stands. Here they continued to meet as Methodists, but resolved that there should be no paid ministry and that the Society should make its own rules for internal government, independent of any external authority. In 1797, one year later, Peter Phillips was converted amongst them, and he was led to consecrate himself



to the work which has linked his name with Independent Methodism. Members of the Society of Friends were also associated with the Society, and their influence was such that the members of the Society became known as Quaker Methodists. The members even adopted the Friends' mode of speech and also of attire, but soon had a very suggestive word added to their title, becoming known as "Singing" Quakers. There was no violent agitation, but a quiet resolve to go their way free from "ministerial supremacy." Peter's brother, John, had entered the Wesleyan itinerant ministry, in which he continued until his eighty-eighth year. Because of this fact Peter was personally appealed to and his brother's example was set before him; but Peter quietly answered, "If it can be shown that a man's preaching is better because he is paid for doing it I will admit my error." Thus, when the first leader of this Society, Richard Harrison, died, Peter was able to take his place.

*Stockport* had a like origin to *Macclesfield*, with which it was closely associated. The founders of it broke away from the *Stockport* Society, which had become united to the Wesleyan New Connexion. They discovered that even the New Connexion did not give them freedom to work with red-hot revivalist zeal, and therefore, like many other groups of Methodists of the period, chose to carve out their own way. Unlike *Macclesfield*, *Stockport* Church exists to-day.

*Oldham* had a more distinctive origin. In 1805 a spiritually minded man named Joseph Matley, a member of St. Peter's, Church of England, gathered a group about him for Bible-reading and Christian fellowship. At one meeting an earnest man (John Nield) ventured to take a text as the basis of an exhortation. Matley,

who had a sincere Churchman's veneration for the clergy, condemned this incursion into what he deemed was the clergyman's special province. Nield thought he was in the right, and so did others, and they joined with him in hiring a room, not far distant from the site on which George Street Chapel, Oldham, is built. They sought liberty, and Lorenzo Dow records in his diary that in 1805 he visited the Independent Methodists at Oldham.

As stated above, the Oldham Society was the first to call itself Independent Methodist, but who suggested that the union of Churches should be known by that name we do not know. Of this we are certain, that the first Conference to print its minutes was held at Macclesfield in 1808, and the title-page reads: "Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Independent Methodists." Two texts on the title-page show the central principle of the Societies, and their estimate of their numerical position. The texts are these: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8); and "Who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zech. iv. 10).

Without ostentation or obtrusion on the public gaze the Independent Methodist denomination came into being. There was no widespread agitation; only here and there a quiet assertion of the rights of Christian men and women to order their own affairs and freedom to realise their ideal of Christian service. There was no great convulsion, or a sudden, abrupt break with their past. There was also no dominating personality like a Wesley, a Kilham, or a Bourne bringing into being a new denomination. The union was formed through the natural desire of brethren of one mind desiring to unite under the flag of Christian liberty. In after

years, through his manifold labours and the formative influence of his teaching and work, Peter Phillips was given the title of Founder of Independent Methodism, and none dispute it. His is the only name of those present at the 1808 Conference which is printed on the hearts of the people. The Primitive Methodist Connexion came into being in 1807. Hugh Bourne, whilst admiring the Friends, could not fully acquiesce in their modes of worship and methods of service, though he strongly shared with them their views on Christian democracy. Ultimately he arrived at the conclusion that a modified connexionalism and a paid ministry, stripped of monetary inducements (some of his colleagues were content with 10s. weekly)<sup>1</sup> was the wisest policy. So, whilst Bourne continued to preach in Independent Methodist chapels and sustained his personal friendship with Independent Methodists, he was led to work on different lines. He revolted, like them, against "ministerial supremacy," and framed the Primitive Methodist Constitution, which enacted that in representation there should always be two laymen to one minister. The layman and his rights must be safeguarded. On that basis the Primitive Methodist organisation has rested up to now. Peter believed that the New Testament taught that the foundation of church authority was the Church itself. Bourne believed that the connexional principle could be modified without interfering unduly with the freedom of the Church. Therefore the Independent Methodists and the Primitive Methodists built according to their light, and those who know their New

<sup>1</sup> At the last Primitive Methodist Conference the minimum salary was fixed at £200.

Testament can decide which comes nearest to the New Testament ideal.

Of course these early Churches met with criticism, and their motives were misrepresented. But this did not rouse in them any iconoclastic spirit. The early minutes of the Conference show that all these Churches claimed was their right to take their own way. There was no organised attempt to proselytise. Some, however, moved by the contrast of the voluntary ministry with the paid ministry, declaimed against the paid ministry. But they were not encouraged. Phillips himself viewed with breadth of mind and charity those opposed to Independent Methodists, and did not himself rail, neither did he encourage others to rail, at paid preachers or those who paid them. As to his own position, his view was: "This (referring to the principles he advocated) is what I conscientiously believe, and I think I am right: if I did not I would not hold such views, and when these principles are attacked I will do my utmost to defend them; but I have no right to be angry with those who differ from me." With such a spirit of tolerance there could be no violent agitation against the "hireling ministry," to use a then current favourite phrase. Indeed, our early preachers cared more to preserve their right to follow their scriptural methods than to spread their views broadcast; therefore our Annual Meeting for many years confined itself to fellowship, with little care for organisation. As the years went on the Churches became consolidated, and what they stood for crystallised. A Constitution came in due course.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

#### CONSTITUTION

IT is recognised in our Constitution that Churches are composed of believers in Jesus Christ and all which that implies, with an equality of opportunity but not of ability, owning Christ only as Master. As believers we co-operate with each other in communities which, like the early Christians, we call Churches. These Churches have no authority but what the members confer; but, as none can work jointly without in some measure sacrificing individual liberty, we agree to be bound by common action and abide by the decision of the majority.

Each Church is an entity, yet associated with other Churches of like persuasion for mutual help. As no one is "to lord it over God's heritage," so no company of Churches may act in such a manner over an individual Church. The source and seat of all authority is in the Church, in which the franchise is not restricted to one sex. Each Church orders its own affairs and appoints its officers. It joins with others, and as the individual yields to the Church his or her liberty so far as it will be helpful to all, so the Churches are expected to be loyal to the Connexion. The Annual Meeting of the Connexion is, therefore, not a legislative but a delibera-

tive assembly, and cannot intervene in the affairs of any Church without consent, and then only as brethren who win by persuasion.

The New Testament Church is our model. We stand for a free Church and a free ministry. From our equality of the brotherhood and freedom of service spring what outsiders deem the peculiarity of our denomination—its unpaid ministry. The unpaid ministry is the outcome of principles which necessitate it. We accept the teaching of Scripture that all are called upon to exercise the gifts which God endows them with, and consequently there should be the freest opportunity for their exercise. A one-man ministry limits the opportunity. All Protestant Churches accept the teaching of the New Testament that believers are a “royal priesthood,” that all must render service according to ability, and that Christianity means a brotherhood. We aim at putting into practice the common belief. As Barclay, the Quaker, said: “Those who love the light must minister according to the light, and not for hire.” All believers are in the ministry of service. Order and officers there must be, but no special caste. It is recognised that if a privileged class is created evil follows both to the privileged class and the Church. We set before the world a Church in which there are no distinctions of ministers and laity. We discard the prefix “Rev.” and other clerical titles, as did the Wesleyan Conference as late as 1821.

#### OUR DOCTRINES

Here we and all evangelical Churches are on common ground. The vital doctrines of the faith of Christen-

dom it is our delight and privilege to teach. Briefly summarised, they are :

1. The existence of one only living and true God, the Creator and Governor of all things ; the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.

2. The inspiration of the Scriptures.

3. The free-will of man, and his fall from a state of innocence to one of corruption and sin.

4. Redemption through Christ only.

5. The necessity of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. That if these be real, they will be shown in the outward conduct by the performance of good works and the leading of a holy life.

#### OUR POLITY

A few sentences will suffice to denote our polity. Each Church is self-governed, and elects officers, president, secretary, treasurer, and stewards, etc. These officers, along with the ministers, leaders, and representatives of Church and School, form an executive for managing the details of the Church, but every important matter is referred to the church meeting for its decision. In all matters the central principle of the Church, being the seat and source of authority, is maintained, and there is no distinction of sex for any office, including that of minister.

Churches in localities convenient to each other follow the good Methodist plan of joining together in Circuits or Districts. So associated they are of mutual help, they come together to further the common cause, promote and arrange the exchange of ministerial labour, and are often of financial assistance to each

other. No preacher is accepted unless first sent to the Circuit Meeting by the sanction of his Church. Of recent years the Connexion has encouraged intending preachers to pursue a systematic course of preparation. Books and tutors are arranged for, as it is recognised that preachers of the Word must be "workmen that needeth not to be ashamed."

In addition to the local Circuits there is the Annual Assembly, which meets on the third Saturday in June, and continues until the following Tuesday. Each church has the privilege of appointing representatives in proportion to membership, and for every Circuit are nominated those who serve, with the officers elected by the Annual Meeting, on an Executive or Connexional Committee, whose proceedings are subject to full review by the Annual Meeting. The Assembly has no power of coercion, and none of its resolutions are effective without the loyal adherence of the Churches. It can only suggest to Churches what they should contribute to the funds.

Those familiar with Methodism will note a resemblance of organisation to that of the "old body." The great difference is that each Church retains its local autonomy and the members have opportunity of exercising their rights. Churches unite in Circuits, and with the Connexion, for mutual help and strength, and maintain the representative principle throughout. Ministers are recognised as having pastoral duties to discharge, and to enable them to fulfil those duties are permanent members of Church Executives and of Circuits, but have no other special privilege. No one is a member of the Annual Assembly of the Connexion unless elected, and all, irrespective of sex, take part on a basis of equality.



The Sunday Schools are self-governed, but responsible to the Church.

The Church appoints its own trustees, but if on the Model Deed the Church practically manages the Trust.

All Churches who are received into the Connexion place their property on the Model Deed.

Through our Annual Meeting we are able to raise and administer a Ministers' Assistance Fund for aged and needy brethren; to direct the operations of evangelists, there being an Evangelistic or Home Mission Fund to which the Churches contribute; to maintain the fellowship of the Churches; to form mission Churches and by aid of the Extension Fund to give pecuniary help. A recent addition is the Foreign Mission Fund. We also publish a magazine monthly, which has been ably edited from its inception by voluntary effort. We issue from the Bookroom publications which are of service to the Churches, and are proud to possess a hymnal and tune-book which rank with the best.

#### AN OFFICIAL DECLARATION

In 1880 the Annual Meeting adopted the subjoined brief outline of our position as Churches:

- I. Doctrines, those commonly expressed by the term Evangelical.
- II. Worship and services, those usual among Methodist Societies.
- III. Every Church self-governed, managing its own financial and other internal affairs.
- IV. Equality of Christian brotherhood, all members sharing in the government of the Church.
- V. Ministry open and free, in contradistinction to an exclusive ministry in which public

teaching is confined to a clerical or ministerial order. Every Christian is called by God to actively labour in His cause, and none can discharge his responsibility by proxy.

- VI. We recognise no clerical titles or designations.
- VII. Our ministry is purely voluntary and unpaid.
- VIII. We have an evangelistic agency, brethren being appointed to go from place to place, preaching the Gospel, visiting weak and planting new Churches; and whilst so engaged they may be maintained, evangelists having "liberty to live of the Gospel."
- IX. Groups of Churches in adjacent neighbourhoods are associated in Districts for ministerial and other mutual advantages.

If we are asked, "Are you Methodists?" we reply, "Yes, as to doctrine, methods of working, and combined effort." "Are you Congregationalists (once Independents)?" we also answer, "Yes; we uphold the principle of each Church being independent and the seat of all authority." "Are you Friends (Quakers)?" again we say, "Yes, so far as the New Testament gives us the example of voluntary service by all believers, ministers included." Our founders had these three church systems in work about them and appropriated from each what approximated to the New Testament plan on which their minds were bent.

Before tracing the slow development of our organisation we give a sketch of Peter Phillips and also sketches of three other builders of the Connexion.

## CHAPTER V

### BUILDERS OF THE CONNEXION

**T**HE four principal outstanding figures of the first hundred years of Independent Methodist History were Peter Phillips, Alexander Denovan, William Sanderson, and William Brimelow, and they built well on scriptural foundations.

#### PETER PHILLIPS

Paul, the Apostle, was a tent-maker. Before he commenced his apostolic ministry he had a worthy place in the world; could do something tangibly useful in it. It was the foundation of his independence, and enabled him to say, "I coveted no man's silver or gold," and to declare, "These hands ministered to my necessities and to them who were with me." Peter Phillips was in the apostolic succession in this, as in other ways: he also was a craftsman. His ancestors for generations had been chair-makers, and he learned the trade. As a competent craftsman the proceeds of his industry supplied his simple wants and enabled him to rear a large family, who took respectable places in the world.

In early manhood he built a house in Ship Yard (a few paces from Bridge Street), Warrington, and it was a residence and workshop. There he established him-

self with Hannah (*née* Peacock), a worthy helpmeet, a sincere Christian woman, who was in the group of early Independent Methodists. It was in this house that his family of nine children first saw the light, and from them sprang twenty-four grandchildren. Here, too, hospitality was given to preachers and social workers, his wife being truly, as her portrait would lead us to surmise, "a mother in Israel." Hugh Bourne was often a guest, and here many times lodged Lorenzo Dow, the eccentric but mighty American evangelist, who greatly influenced both Peter Phillips and Hugh Bourne, leading the latter to organise the famous Camp Meetings. The house, which has been demolished, was in an old-world corner with a pleasant view of the river Mersey, and was a centre of many gracious influences. The workshop was a great fact; it gave Peter social standing (humble though it was) and freedom. His industry was not regulated by a "buzzer," nor had he the restraints of an employee. His faculties were not numbed by the factory system, which grew so greatly in his life-time. Independent Methodism would have missed much if Peter Phillips had not been a chair-maker and, colloquially speaking, "his own master."

Peter Phillips was born at Warrington, January 10, 1778, the fifth child in a family of twelve, and the third son. As already mentioned, one of Peter's brothers became a Wesleyan circuit minister. In their boyhood it seemed unlikely that Peter and John would find their life-work in the ministry. Their father was the town crier, a notable personage at that period, and, unfortunately, of intemperate habits. He believed, and likewise did his family, that beer had special life-giving virtues. Peter was always abstemious, yet was past middle

age before he was convinced by Livesey that the food properties of beer had been over-estimated, and were certainly not essential. But he had previously determined at a meeting in 1833 that abstinence for the sake of others was a sacrifice he must make. Livesey's argument made him not only a convinced abstainer, but an ardent advocate of temperance to the end of his days. His attitude to total abstinence



PETER PHILLIPS.

is illuminative of his character ; he was one who followed the light.

When just over eighteen years of age Peter came to a religious decision, and was a member of a group of Wesleyan Methodists at Warrington, who later formed one of our first Churches in 1796. The story of its origin is told elsewhere, and it is only necessary to say here that six years after the formation of the Church Peter was appointed a minister. It was in this year

(1802) that he was married and that Friars' Green Chapel was built, a work in which he assisted with his own hands. The encounter with ecclesiastical discipline out of which Friars' Green Church sprang sent him to a study of the New Testament, where he learned that Churches should be self-governed and the ministry unpaid. He laid bare these New Testament principles to others, and upon this foundation the Society was built. But he was not an iconoclast. Whilst he turned away from the Wesleyan Methodist system of Church government and ministry, he did not seek to destroy the system, but to prove that the New Testament plan was the better one. He even reproved those who railed against the paid system. He held firmly to what he deemed the New Testament view of the ministry, and once remarked, "I have no right to be angry with those who differ from me." It was, however, the same Peter who gave the answer to critics: "If it can be shown that a man's preaching is better because he is paid for doing it I will admit my error." It was not his action in the initiatory steps of the Connexion which earned Peter the title of "Founder of Independent Methodism," but his life's work in the Independent Methodist ministry.

Friars' Green Church was founded by the group referred to before, and those who came into association with them. Among the latter were some who held Quaker views. Indeed this company of believers who held that they should exercise their preaching gifts as the Lord led them became known as Quaker Methodists, and many adopted the Quaker garb and staidness of deportment. They also adopted the Quaker mode of speech to each other, and did not have instrumental music. Peter Phillips, as his portrait indicates,

retained his Quaker style of attire to the close of his days, and up to 1844 Friars' Green reported to the Annual Meeting as Quaker Methodists. As the foremost of the ministers at Friars' Green Church, which became the mother Church of others in the immediate radius of Warrington, his ability and character won him first place. The first recorded President of the Connexion was Richard Harrison, of Friars' Green Church, who held office in 1808, and in 1816 Peter Phillips, at the age of thirty-eight, was President, a position he subsequently filled on eight different occasions.

Like most children born of parents in humble circumstances in the eighteenth century, he never went to a day school, and had to face toil in very tender years. First at a Church of England Sunday School, and then at Bank Street Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, he learned to read and write. Being of a studious nature, and having a very retentive memory and sound judgment, he became well versed in the Scriptures. His son writes: "Having a large family to provide for, my father could not devote so much of his time to the cultivation of his mind as he was anxious to do; yet, although his engagements in attending meetings were very numerous, whatever time he could devote to reading and study was not lost, and by this means he acquired a vast amount of information of an historic, geographic, and scientific nature. His powers of retentive memory were truly surprising. His mind thus became expanded and well stocked, which rendered him an agreeable companion in conversation, and his easy and cheerful manner made him a welcome guest." Others tell us that he had a cultivated ear for music, and he was

especially careful in training the choir for special occasions. He found time, too, to join in public movements for the welfare of his native town, and was much disappointed that he could not join in the meetings of the Evangelical Union, as Independent Methodists and Quakers were not recognised as having ministers. Remarking upon this, he said: "We choose to preach the Gospel without charge to the poor. This is our offence, and for this we are cast off. . . . If a man smite me on the right cheek I can offer the other, but when a man, under the plea of a zeal for God, takes away from me my religious privilege, I feel a lion heart within me."

Peter commenced to preach in 1801, his first sermon being given at Whitley Reed (a homestead in Cheshire) from Job xxxiii. 28-9. As years went by the area of his labours widened, and his son recalled walking with him from fifteen to thirty miles to appointments. Amongst the places he visited on foot were Manchester, Macclesfield, Chester, Oldham, Preston, Wigan, Bolton, Blackburn, Sheffield, Liverpool, and when the railway became available he went so far afield as Glasgow, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Halifax. His labours were especially constant in the Churches near Warrington, Stockton Heath, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lowton, Lymm, Culcheth, and Risley, all of which looked to Friars' Green as the parent Church. Fair weather and foul found him punctually fulfilling his appointments. All accounts agree in describing him as an acceptable preacher, and that those who heard him once desired to listen to him again. One who knew him well writes: "He was not a noisy preacher, but calm and deliberate. I remember he would sometimes make a pause and strike the pulpit with the candle



snuffers (candles were the illuminant then) or his hand, and say, 'Listen to me and let these words have a place in your hearts,' and when he spoke we found that he had not excited our attention in vain." Though he delighted in the work of preaching he refused a paid pastorate which was once offered him, and his old age was cared for by his children. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he did not keep a diary, and there was not a scrap of his notes left of his sermons and addresses except one on war which ranks him a Pacifist and is given below. But his work was great. He travelled over 30,000 miles to preach, and he preached 6,000 times, besides attending to his own Church at Friars' Green 10,000 times. Numberless journeys were made on foot. His earthly end came on May 11, 1853, when he was over seventy-four years of age, and in the fifty-first year of his ministry.

He died in faith, and one of his recorded sayings, as he lay awaiting the end, was this: "Live in peace, and God will bless you; and be sure to attend to your Sunday School, as your strength lies there. You will do most good there. It seems as if that were our province." Then he repeated with clearness lines which he had not heard for fifty years:

"In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?  
Jesus, my all in all Thou art,  
Strength of my failing flesh and heart.  
O could I catch a smile from Thee  
And drop into eternity!"

His character gave him supremacy, and still inspires to unselfish service. Friars' Green Church is proud of the fact that adjoining the chapel is laid the body of Peter Phillips.

Friars, Green Church reported to the Annual Meeting: "We have the very painful fact to state that on May 11, 1853, our esteemed and venerable pastor, Peter Phillips, gave up his spirit to the God who gave it. The loss to us at Warrington seems the same as



HANNAH PHILLIPS

the loss of Wesley to the Wesleyans, for we have submitted to him and paid deference to his opinion when we would not have submitted to each other, and thus as a father he brought his vast wisdom, judgment, and experience to bear on the creation and diffusion of peace, union, and prosperity, and his dying or last words to us at the Annual Meeting were that we

love one another; strive not for mastery, and, instead of making aggression on the Christian world, make aggression on Satan's kingdom."

Phillips's wife died in November 1858, five years later, she then being seventy-eight years of age. She was a woman of strong character and overflowing with benevolence and thought for those about her. In those days women did not turn as often as they do now to a medical man for help, and she was called into hundreds of homes to give her womanly skill as a midwife. In this way her influence was widely felt, for she was always ready to pray with the sick and give counsel where she could. Her love for the class-meeting and the love-feast was manifest as long as she had strength to attend. She and Peter were truly joined together in the Lord. Her body was interred in Warrington Cemetery on Sunday, November 27, in the presence of over 1,000 people.

### A TYPICAL SERMON

In an early Annual Meeting report there is given an outline of a sermon preached by Peter Phillips upon the text, "He that hath no sword let him sell his cloak and buy one." The notes may be placed alongside a story told in *The Short History of Independent Methodism*. Every account of Peter Phillips describes him as a teacher of rare insight. Brilliant preaching he never attempted. Only once, as far as we know, did he announce a sermon beforehand, and the circumstance is too interesting to be left unnoticed. It was during the days following the massacre of Peterloo. Like most Lancashire towns, Warrington had its bands of insurgents, and the vigilance

of the authorities was strained to the utmost. The Quaker Methodists, from their democratic tendencies, were under some suspicion. The suspicion seemed to be confirmed when Peter Phillips surprised the congregation at Friars' Green by announcing that on the next Sunday evening he would preach from the text, "He that hath no sword let him sell his cloak and buy one." People gathered in crowds to hear the prophet of revolt, and the officers of the law took prominent places in the audience. The neighbours took the precaution to barricade their windows in anticipation of riot. But it was a needless precaution. The preacher calmly proceeded to show the spiritual significance of the text and to describe the mission of Christ's disciples in every age. The law officers left before the sermon ended. Let us hope they had felt the keen edge of the sword of the Spirit.

The sermon notes given in the *Minutes* probably represent the sermon preached at Friars' Green, and we quote them fully as follows :

"Can these words mean a weapon of destruction? I think not.

"1. From the character of Christ, which according to prophecy was that He should be called the Prince of Peace and the Giver of Peace; that His government should be a government of peace; that in His Kingdom (His holy mountain) they should neither hurt nor destroy; that the sword should be made into a ploughshare and the spear into a pruning-hook. And, therefore, the angels sang when He was born, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace,'

"2. From the conduct of Christ. 'When He was reviled He reviled not again, when He was persecuted He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously.' Yea, He was led like a lamb to the slaughter and like a sheep He was dumb, etc.

"3. From the precepts of Christ, such as 'Love your enemies,' 'Do good to them who hate you,' 'When thou art smitten on one cheek, turn the other.'

"4. From the practice of the apostles, who never on any occasion made use of the sword after the admonition to Peter, 'Put up thy sword,' etc.

"In the next place, what can the text mean? It is highly probable that it is to be understood metaphorically, as when it is said, 'A sword shall pierce through thine own soul, also that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed' (Luke ii. 35), and 'He beareth not the sword in vain' (Rom. xiii. 4). Also (Rev. i. 16), 'Out of his mouth went a two-edged sword.' See likewise Rev. ii. 16, and xix. 15. Further, sword is the Spirit, which is the word of God.

"What shall we say about the injunction, 'Sell your garment'? To buy and sell are terms made use in Scripture when only asking and seeking are meant, such as 'Buy the truth and sell it not.' 'Buy wine and milk,' and the advice to the foolish virgins, 'Go to them that sell.' It may mean put off the habits of wickedness and the filthy garments of unrighteousness and take the whole armour of God, and use the same kind of a sword as the Lord used in the ministry of the prophets (see Hosea vi. 5) and as the Baptist did the axe of his fiery ministry (see Matt. iii. 11).

"Lastly, it cannot mean the sword for the destruction of life, because He hath said, 'Thou shalt not kill' and 'Thou shalt do no murder.' And we know that when the apostles wanted to call for fire from heaven to destroy, Christ said, 'Ye know not what spirit we are of. The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save.'"

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### ALEXANDER DENOVAN

Alexander Denovan was a leader of men. He gave one a sense of strength like Aberdeen granite. His noble head, with its silver locks, crowned a well-developed figure of over the average height. His

benign countenance and gleaming eyes told of clean living and high thinking, and his commanding presence was matched with a sonorous voice. Somewhat austere in manner, in his later years to his youthful hearers (of whom the writer was one), he stood as one apart and spoke as one having authority. And yet those who knew him most intimately tell us of his boyish exploits, when he fancied, like his playmates, that he was hiding from Bonaparte, whose then threatened invasion of Great Britain thrilled the imagination of the youth of the period. They recall, too, that in his early manhood he was "stage-struck," having Sheridan Knowles, the dramatist and actor, as a fellow student. Of stately bearing and strong physique, like Livingstone, he loved walking long distances, and at eighty years of age would not ride if he deemed it was convenient to walk. From choice he physically flourished on oatmeal. In fact, in many Lancashire homes he taught the housewife how to make Scotch "parritch."

Fifty years ago Alexander Denovan was "the grand old man" of Independent Methodism. He was born at Bannockburn in September 1794, the youngest son of his father. He had a Covenanter ancestry, and one of his valued possessions was a plate, given to him by his grandmother, who had seen it used by the Covenanters in the communion services on the hillsides, where they met to worship God in His own temple. He had the advantage of what learning could be got at St. Ninian's School in his native town, and at twelve years of age commenced the battle of life in Glasgow. He went there to learn the business of a grocer with Mr. Crum, a friend of his father. There he won esteem, and was treated as a son. It

was at Mr. Crum's grocer's shop an incident occurred which has a lesson for the youth of to-day. Careful attention to detail won him a wider sphere. Two gentlemen one day looked at the grocer's shop-window and they had a controversy whether the words "tea and coffee" on a card were written or copperplate.



ALEXANDER DENOVAN

To decide the matter, they entered the shop and made the inquiry from young Alexander, who admitted that it was his writing. Thereupon one of the gentlemen offered him a situation with his firm, who were West India merchants. The situation was accepted, with the approval of Mr. Crum. He was then sixteen years of age, and he continued his connection with

the firm until his death, a period of sixty-eight years. Very early his integrity was tested. The member of the firm who had been attracted to him requested Alexander to do a certain piece of work on a Sunday, and he refused on the ground that it was not a work of necessity. The other partner was very angry, and was for Alexander's dismissal, as was also the gentleman concerned; but the latter paused, and, realising that the young man was conscientious, said, "If he is faithful to his God he will also be faithful to us," and instead of dismissing him saw to it that he had his salary increased.

Like our founder, Peter Phillips, he was fortunate in his marriage. When only just over eighteen years of age he was wedded to Ann Bell, a native of Glasgow, who bore him twelve children, of whom at his death there were living two sons and six daughters, all married. For forty-eight years she was his faithful wife, and one of her daughters records: "Characters more suited to mould one another into greater strength could hardly be found—he, originally impulsive, unrestrained in purpose, ready to take fire with his own heat and to go to extremes in action; she, calm and practical, and prone perhaps too much to count difficulties and to weigh results. He led her forward when she might have remained behind; she held him back when he might have gone too far."

On becoming aware that three of his former school-fellows were at Glasgow University, he conceived the desire to study there also, and his wife fed his ambition. But he was then a married man with two children, and had only a very moderate salary. How could the expense be met? A way was devised. With a friend he commenced classes for writing and arith-



metic. His employers were indulgent as to time, the school fees supplied the university dues, and he got through his university course, especially distinguishing himself in Hebrew and Greek. He was inspired to pursue his strenuous labours because he conceived a greater object than culture—that was to preach the Gospel.

His wife's mother was a Methodist, and she often persuaded Alexander to attend the services at the Wesleyan Methodist chapel. It was at this Methodist chapel, at a love-feast, which he admitted afterwards he attended to be amused, that he was led to serious spiritual concern. Soon he joined this obscure Methodist Society. This led him to Bible study, and eventually to intimacy with a few who had seceded from a Presbyterian Church (from the ever-recurring cause, ministerial austerity) to do Christian work on New Testament lines: they would give service without pay. A room was rented and a congregation gathered. It was determined in March 1820 to form a Church. As Presbyterians they naturally had an idea that a pastor should be ordained, and this difficulty was solved for them by two brethren—R. McPherson, who had been ordained in the Church of England, and by another brother who had been ordained in the Church of Scotland. They joined the new Society, and ordained Denovan and two others as pastors. This title they selected instead of bishop; it being thought that the title of bishop, though it was scriptural, would be misunderstood. Their ordination took place by laying on of hands, on April 6, 1820 [Glasgow was the only Church which adopted ordination]. We had then several Churches in and about Newcastle, and the little group in Glasgow somehow got into

touch with them, and in fact a letter was sent by Newcastle Church to Glasgow to guide them. Hence Glasgow applied for admission into the Union in May 1820, and the letter from the Church said they had four pastors, Alexander being the youngest. He was then twenty-six years of age. He threw himself heart and soul into the work of preaching, and causes were founded at Hamilton, Lanark, Bothwell, and Paisley. Subsequent events showed that he never turned away from his purpose to live a consecrated life, and in after-years he was for a long period the "chief pastor" of the Glasgow Church, which had at one time 600 members on its roll. The Church had for its home a spacious structure in Charlotte Street, close to the famous Glasgow Green, and on the green he often stood to address a concourse of a thousand people. He had a movable pulpit, and as weather permitted took his stand before the multitudes who flocked to the Green. He thus became a familiar figure and was held in great esteem. Indeed he was known as "Saint Denovan." Whilst making the preaching of the Gospel and its dissemination by his pen the chief work of his life, he also laboured in the temperance movement. Though, for the sake of comradeship, he tolerated the use of tobacco by others, he made it obvious that smoking to him was an abomination and a filthy habit.

In 1821 Bro. Denovan was present at the Conference which was held in Oldham, and he so impressed the brethren that in 1823 he was appointed editor of the magazine, a post which he held continuously for twenty-five years, and then again from 1864 to 1868. In 1831, at the age of thirty-seven, he became President, and including this year had in 1878 for

thirty years filled the position. He was also Secretary of the Connexion for three years. If Peter Phillips was our founder, Alexander Denovan was the "guide, philosopher, and friend" of Independent Methodism. His was the directing mind, and that mind was well stored with Scripture and knowledge of church history. Whilst maintaining by tongue and pen that the Scottish Presbyterian Church had left the New Testament ideal in its form of ministry, he was at one with it in his detestation of the errors of Popery. He would have no truce with Popery. It is recorded that he made sacrifices cheerfully. He rejected offers of worldly advancement, as he feared the pursuit of wealth would be a temptation to neglect evangelistic work. After his first term as editor there was a balance in hand of over £9, which was voted to him, but he made the sum up to £10 and gave it to the Welsh Mission Fund at Liverpool. He was content with what supplied his needs and the means of educating his family, the members of which all took good positions in the world. Here it may be remarked that one of his daughters became the wife of the late William Oxley, who served the Connexion both as President and Secretary.

Later in life Bro. Denovan rejoiced in greater freedom from business ties. This liberty he diligently used in visits to our Churches, where he was always welcomed on special occasions, and also at week-night meetings. None of his brethren had a greater zeal for spreading the Gospel and for making known our Free Church principles. At eighty years of age, whilst on a visit to his daughter in London, he often took his stand in Hyde Park to expound the principles of a "Free Church and a Free Ministry," as he was anxious

to establish a Church in the metropolis. One of his fellow ministers in Glasgow rightly said of him: "Faithfully did he serve the Master; faithfully did he serve the Churches; faithfully did he serve the brethren." If he secured the reality he was not bound to mere terms of expression. Following the lead of the Lancashire Churches; the Glasgow Church first assumed the name of Independent Methodist, and later, so as to disarm Presbyterian prejudices against Methodists, that of Church Presbyterians; and later still, Free Gospel Christians.

His abiding work is enshrined in our Constitution. He drew up "The Testimony of Union," which is typical of his mind and method. No way would he go without Scripture warrant. When the "Testimony" was adopted in 1852, several of the Churches opposed it vehemently, and even withdrew from the Union, but in a few years resumed their place in the Annual Meeting, having learned that their fears of interference with church independence were groundless. In those troublous days he went from one Church to another to pacify and unite, and he had his reward, all giving him honour. The "Testimony" was the product of his time, and has a flavour of the Presbyterianism which influenced his early life. Its phrasing, of course, lacks the lighter modern touch, but its main outline and scriptural foundation stand unshaken. It was conceived in a spirit of comprehension and unity, in days when our churches appeared to care little for cohesion. Denovan had seen in thirty years fifty Churches lost to the Union owing to the lack of a basis of union. He had, therefore, good reason for securing such a basis. When the agitation over the "Testimony" ceased a Model Deed as its corollary was

agreed upon in 1860. This deed, whilst giving the fullest liberty to the Church, was a further step towards Connexional stability.

Bro. Denovan was a writer of considerable ability. His first essays in literature were with pamphlets, sermons, and leaflets defending our polity, and in 1827 he compiled and published a hymn-book. As editor of the magazine he found some scope for his literary activities, and in 1861 he published a volume giving his views on *Election According to Holy Scripture*. In 1866 came his *Appeal to the Christian World*, which is a veritable arsenal of facts and argumentative weapons with which to expound and defend our New Testament position as a Connexion.

The Church of which Bro. Denovan was the senior minister on several occasions gave him tangible tokens of their unbounded affection for him, and in 1878 the Connexion cheered his last days with a mark of appreciation, he having attained the age of eighty-four in the previous February. In June of that year the annual meeting was held at Glasgow, and Bro. Denovan presided over its proceedings. He was re-elected and given a surprise by the presentation to him of an album in which were portraits of himself and the Connexional officers and committee. In the album was an illuminated address which stated that Bro. Denovan had been a preacher for over sixty years, had preached 10,000 times, on nearly fifty occasions had attended the Annual Meeting, and had served as President, Secretary and Editor. It concluded by saying : "We glorify God for your exemplary life, for your unblemished reputation, for your disinterested labours, and for the consecration of your powers to the extension of Christ's Kingdom upon earth." George Winter-

burn, who was a veteran stalwart of Independent Methodism at Bolton, made the presentation. Few of the delegates saw Bro. Denovan again, for on the succeeding October 24 he passed into the Unseen whilst calmly sleeping. On the morning of the day he died he sang :

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole,  
I want Thee for ever to live in my soul ;  
Break down every idol, cast out every foe,  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

His first wife died in 1861, and two years later he married Mary Smith, who died in 1872.

His death was deeply mourned in all our Churches, and many were individually represented at his funeral in Glasgow Cemetery.

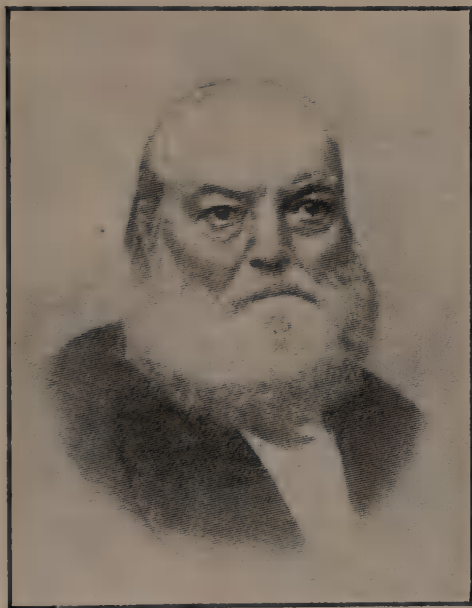
"Having completed my eightieth year and entered upon my eighty first, I would hereby call upon all that is within me to magnify and adore the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity, who has thus so graciously favoured me, and I would, the Lord Jesus strengthening me, anew enter into Covenant Engagement to be for Him and Him alone.

— And let it be perfectly understood that I mean by "Him and Him alone" the Eternal God head in whom

HANDWRITING OF ALEXANDER DENOVAN IN HIS  
EIGHTY-FIRST YEAR

## WILLIAM SANDERSON

William Sanderson was not an ordinary man. For fifty years he held a unique place in our Connexion. Physically, he was tall and bulky, even unwieldy in



WILLIAM SANDERSON

his later years, and in pulpit power he also towered above his brethren. Few could read the Scriptures in public with a like effect; in public prayer all were made to feel that God was nigh, and the Word had a living force as he expounded it. Joined with a not un-

musical voice of great carrying range, he had a vivid, dominating personality. His eyes challenged, arrested, being constantly charged with emotion and fire. Manuscript fettered him. What he did write reads tamely, but the words when uttered had living power. There was a magnetism in him which attracted, and he had a charm of manner and persuasiveness of spirit. Therefore, though he was a king in the pulpit, he was also welcomed in social intercourse. There his mirth was contagious, and he was forgiven for—shall I call it a weakness?—his fondness for tobacco. He was a living, genial soul, and very staunch in his friendships.

In the pulpit and on the platform he spoke as one having authority. He made the most of what little education he had received, and the great truths of the New Testament were his mainstay. His retentive memory was stored with Holy Writ, and he marshalled his appeals with a “Thus saith the Lord.” His spirit was set aflame with Paul’s epistles, and he poured out with the zeal of a personal witness the vital doctrines of the Gospel. The last time the writer heard him preach he had for his text, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” He was then eighty-six years of age, and scarcely able to bear his weight of years; indeed, unable to guide a glass of water to his lips. It was a characteristic sermon. He roamed over the Bible as if every part of it was familiar, and the style was truly classical, not a false note to mar the standard of scriptural language. This was at Bingley, the last sermon he preached at an Annual Meeting.

For fifty years Bro. Sanderson was truly the Connexional “travelling preacher.” Every Church was



glad to welcome him. At some school anniversaries he was regarded as being inseparable from the event. At our Annual Assemblies he was a leading figure, and when he preached on those occasions there was converting power. In the conversations on the Work of God he was at his best. At the age of eighty-two he recorded: "I have been privileged this year to visit fifteen of our Churches and to preach to them thirty-eight times; in some places souls were converted. I have had the honour of taking part in opening three new chapels, viz., St. Helens, Nelson, and Barnoldswick, the two latter the most commodious and costly of any in the Connexion. During the last fifty-three years I have taken part in the opening services at sixty new chapels, schools, and mission-rooms." When in his eighty-sixth year, Bro. Sanderson computed that he had then travelled 80,000 miles to preach, and had preached and lectured 6,814 times. This meant that in his vigorous manhood he had walked thousands of miles to meet the calls which came to him. At the opening of the old chapel from which Prescott Church sprang he and the late James Firth fitted up the room, travelling on foot each day from Liverpool to Prescott. In the days when money was scanty at Zion Chapel, Liverpool, he would scrub the floors, repair the windows, and whatsoever his hand found to do he did it with his might.

In reviewing Bro. Sanderson's career one has often to sum up years of toil in a sentence. At four different periods he was President of the Connexion, for eleven years acted as its Secretary, and was editor, or co-editor, of the magazine, then the *Free Gospel Advocate*, for nine years. He compiled a hymn-book, composing many of the hymns, and did more—printed it with his

own hands. There were blemishes in the work, but they were covered by the sense of possessing our own book. He also printed and issued a little book giving his views on "The Hired Ministry." Whilst he had control of the *Advocate* he used its pages continually to strengthen its readers in a scriptural defence of our position in relation to an unpaid ministry. He bristled with fight on this subject, and was always ready for combat with objectors. Readily he arranged debates with those who upheld a "hired ministry," for to him the paid system was an abomination, and one which undermined Christianity. "An hireling fleeth because he is an hireling," was a polemical stick he often used. Withal he kept on brotherly terms with many whom he held were in the thrall of the paid system. Sometimes the debates, often before crowded audiences stirred to strong feelings, would extend over several nights, and his opening lecture usually occupied two hours. These debates, as often did his preaching efforts, brought physical exhaustion, perspiration pouring from him. You find the record in his diary: "Refreshed in spirit; hoarse," but the same day he is lecturing again.

Here, perhaps, I had better interpose a few biographical facts. William Sanderson was born on May 28, 1811, at Ashton-in-Makerfield, the youngest of ten sons and brother of two sisters. His father was a working joiner and a skilled man, but, like the mass of workers in his days, intemperate in habits. In his childhood his father took up his residence in Liverpool. The care of the family fell upon the mother—"his sainted mother" often was the background of affecting appeals. Following his inclination, he became an errand-boy to a tailor and draper, and as

he grew in years mastered the tailor's craft. He subsequently was in business on his own account. Often on his evangelistic journeys he worked at his trade and conducted services in the evening. He had little religious impression in his youth ; got into bad company, formed bad habits, but an experience of running away from home sobered him. He married when he was little over eighteen years of age, an age not unusual at that period. His partner was fifteen years his senior, but after a happy married life of fifty years he held her up as a pattern. Out of a grateful memory he wrote : " Little or no success will attend the labourer in word and doctrine unless his wife sympathises with him in his work, encourages him when cast down, and is willing to make sacrifice of home comforts that her partner may hold forth the Word of Life to sinners far and near." Both of them early in married life made their decision for Christ, and at twenty-one years of age he was Secretary of the Prayer Leaders' Plan at a Wesleyan Church. Two years later he was appointed a class-leader, a position he always delighted to fill.

Then came events which shaped his career. The Wesleyan Society of which he was a member sympathised with Dr. Warren and others who formed the Wesleyan Methodist Association to protest against arbitrary acts of the Wesleyan Conference. He was dismissed from office by the circuit minister, and joined with others, also unchurched, in mission work. A new congregation was gathered, and he was appointed a preacher. His trial sermon was an ordeal, for he relates, " I never saw the people, for I foolishly fixed my eyes on a beam in the roof and never took them off until I was done." Soon he was led to give up

business and join with another in mission work, being given a small salary. At the services they held there were many conversions, yet he did not feel the same spiritual satisfaction as when he was unpaid, and he resolved to be again a free man. But he could not cease evangelistic work. He loved to preach in the open air, and, as many gathered to listen, he and his companions arranged to hire a room for bad weather. This act brought him into collision with the Wesleyan Association authorities, who required him to give up the room. This he naturally refused to do, and severed his connection with the Association, ceasing to lead two classes in which there were sixty members. Having done this, he found the owner of the room would not continue him as a tenant. But bent on saving souls, he made other plans. Services were held in the open air, and shortly a temporary building (the Tabernacle) was erected in Great Charlotte Street, the site of Zion Chapel. This was in 1840, and, having heard on his preaching expeditions of Peter Phillips, he communicated with him. Recalling this period, Bro. Sanderson said: "We found much opposition to freedom, I can tell you, but I was always free. I was born free, and intend to remain so." From that tabernacle the Liverpool Churches arose.

In 1841 Bro. Sanderson was present at the Annual Meeting held in Wigan. He was thirty years of age, had tested the Gospel which made free, and was cordially welcomed by Peter Phillips, who was President that year. Bro. Sanderson found a congenial sphere amongst us. He was appointed preacher for the Sunday evening service, and the *Minutes* say: "A prayer-meeting was held and ■ good many cried for mercy, and some found it, to the joy of their souls." The same

year he visited Friars' Green, Warrington, and, recalling the visit, he wrote : " It was with difficulty I could speak to the penitents on account of their number. At near ten o'clock we adjourned to the vestry, the long central form being filled with seeking souls. Oh, what a glorious sight ! My voice being gone, we could only mentally pray. We remained for some time silently engaged with God, when Sister Phillips began to sing, ' Blood of Jesus, cleanse my soul from every stain.' The seeking sinners found their Saviour, and rose to their feet blessing and praising God." Verily Bro. Sanderson had his reward, and could well afford to refuse offers which were repeatedly made to him to become a paid minister.

At fifty years of age Bro. Sanderson had acquired, by prudence and diligent attendance to business, though he never let business interfere with his religious engagements, a little competency. As he had no family to provide for, he determined, with the cordial assent of his wife, to give up business and devote himself exclusively to religious work. Liverpool Churches had his first care, but, like Paul, he bore the " care of all the Churches." What visiting among the Churches in those days meant can be forcibly realised by his own narrative. At seventy-seven years of age he wrote : " In looking back on more than fifty years I am amazed at the extraordinary change for the better in the condition of the working classes of this country. Wages are much higher and the hours of labour considerably less ; children are well fed, clothed, and educated ; their home, furniture, and domestic comfort are greatly improved. When I first began to visit the Churches, and for some time afterwards, I found a state of things truly wretched. In one home

that accommodated the preacher the father showed me his piece. He was a handloom weaver, and had worked hard to finish it that day, and after six days' toil he would receive 4s. 6d. for his week's wages. On more than one occasion, when invited to take refreshment by the kind-hearted people to whom I had been ministering, I have been sick at heart when I beheld the scanty fare and a number of hungry children to be fed. I turned away, for I considered it would be sinful to eat what the poor children so much needed. I have been in twelve beds in thirteen nights. One for me, I remember, was placed in a recess in the wall of a large room that had been used for handloom weavers, containing five beds, occupied by ten adults and one child. From another bed on which I lay I could view the stars through the tiles, and in the morning the snow covered the quilt. Some bedrooms had no doors. At another place I occupied a bed with two brethren, which was divided from my host's bed by a wall, three feet high, composed of salt. Early in the morning, on getting out of bed, I unwittingly set my foot on a piece of oilcloth that covered a hole in the floor; away went my limb as far as it could go into the shop below. When I was in Staffordshire, being shown to my room by the good man of the house—in it was a winding staircase—in passing the third storey I suppose my look implied, How much higher have we to climb? The man gravely said, 'I allus like to tak' the preacher as near heaven as I can.' I could multiply such incidents if necessary, but it is a fact that there are no such experiences now. There are, on the contrary, thank God, not only the comforts but the luxuries of life found in most, if not all, the preachers' homes in the Connexion."

William Sanderson was ever seeking to put the Churches on a stable foundation, and therefore was a sympathetic co-worker with Alexander Denovan for the better organisation of the Connexion. His experience taught him that there must be organisation and general unity of belief, or the Churches would be as a rope of sand. Therefore, he upheld that the Churches should subscribe to the Testimony of Union submitted in 1852. It was unfortunately entitled the "Bond or Testimony." Lovers of liberty were affrighted at the title and half of the Churches seceded. Denovan and Sanderson, then the two most prominent Connexional men, visited the Churches and struggled to undo the mischief caused by those who fostered misunderstanding. The obnoxious word "Bond" was taken out of the document, and ultimately the principal seceding Churches returned to their allegiance. Bro. Sanderson was then ready with another auxiliary to Connexional stability, and the Conference agreed to a Model Deed which he had prepared, and which secured all property placed upon it for Connexional purposes. For lack of this simple and equitable business arrangement scores of Churches had left the Connexion or gone out of existence. But his love of order gave way later on to the consuming passion of his life: "The Gospel must be preached without monetary reward"; "The workman was worthy of his meat"; and all maintenance must be in kind and not in coin. Thus he contended, but the Testimony was there. Year after year it accused the Conference of not organising evangelistic work and of not calling out evangelists. Bro. Sanderson declined to be called out as an evangelist under Conference direction. He was a free lance, and gathered some Churches to resist the



calling out of evangelists to be maintained by the Connexion. In a letter, beautiful for its simplicity of spirit, he subsequently acknowledged his error. To prevent misapprehension, it should be clearly understood that the brethren called to leave businesses or occupations for evangelistic service have not stipulated for any particular sum by way of remuneration, but have left themselves in the hands of the Connexion as to maintenance. The late William Brimelow, the biographer of Bro. Sanderson, remarks: "While this continues to be the case the form of maintenance, whether in kind or money, does not affect the principle; in either case the professional or commercial element is excluded."

He had encouragements by the way. On one occasion the Annual Meeting presented him with a Bible as a token of esteem. At his golden wedding celebration he was presented with an address by the Liverpool Churches. He also considered it a great honour to be, along with the late W. Brimelow, a delegate to the first Methodist Ecumenical Conference. Thinking of the reception at the Mansion House in London, he observes: "It was indeed a grand sight, one never to be forgotten. Oh, what will it be when they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of our God and His Christ?"

A glimpse of the inner life of Bro. Sanderson is given in an extract from his private journal, when he was the editor of the Magazine. It refers to an accident, the effects of which he felt to the end of his life. The entry reads:

"July 31, 1869.—A year gone! Oh, what sorrow,



affliction, and bereavement have been my lot during the twelve months now passed away! On August 1

July 30 1868

My Soul look back on  
the past what mercy what blessing  
bestowed! What privileges! Still  
employed in the Lord's vineyard  
and much encouraged by seeing  
the work of God progressing by our  
means since I wrote built two  
New Chapels one at Tellow St in  
1866 and Maghull in 1867 besides  
enlarging Zion Glory in to God's  
for all His favours. May my soul  
draw closer to my blessed Saviour  
no of members 286. Scholars. 368

July 31 1869 A year gone! Oh  
what sorrow affliction & bereavements  
have been my lot during the  
twelve months now passed away  
On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August I was  
thrown out of a conveyance at  
Maghull and it was next to  
a miracle I was not killed

A PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF WILLIAM SANDERSON

I was thrown out of a conveyance at Maghull, and it was next to a miracle that I was not killed. Although severely injured, my life was preserved, and my labour

in the Lord's vineyard of a few weeks' interrupted. I have lost by death no less than fifteen of my Christian friends from the Church, two of them well tried and valuable fellow labourers, Bros. Shaw and Davenport. Some of the cream of our Church are no more here. But, thank God, all of them died in full triumph. So I sorrow not as those without hope. I am thankful that I have been greatly supported in my work, and my soul enjoys sweet peace. Oh, blessed Jesus, instruct and guide me and make me successful in winning souls! Praise God, the Church is in peace. Oh, for a closer union with God and heavenly wisdom that I may win souls to Christ!"

Bro. Sanderson wrote his autobiography, to which I must refer my readers, and sum up briefly. He was a man of prayer; by prayer he was helped out of financial difficulties, and the way was opened out to him in many ways. The greatest affliction he had was the loss of his first wife in July 1880 (at the age of eighty-four), and, being dependent more than some men are upon a helpmeet, in answer to prayer his second wife was revealed to him in a dream. They were married in 1881, and she died in 1897. When she had passed away he was by prayer led to seek a third partner in Sister Rigby, of Southport, an old friend, who had been left a widow. She was a handmaid in time of need, when he was waiting for the end. He had often expressed the wish that he might "at the same moment cease to work and live." This was not granted him, but what he had preached to others was a glorious fact to himself. He had the assurance that he would receive the welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." In this faith, on the evening of Sunday, January 8,

1899, he passed away, being in his eighty-eighth year. One of his favourite texts is his epitaph, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and for ever." His journal shows that he often humbled himself before God, but he feared not the face of man.

His mortal remains were laid in Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool, on January 12, 1889.

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### WILLIAM BRIMELOW

William Brimelow in early life sat under the ministry of Peter Phillips at Warrington, but his life-work lay in Bolton, where in young manhood he took up his residence. Whilst serving an apprenticeship to the craft of basket-making he was an earnest student in his leisure hours, and became an expert shorthand writer. This decided the bent of his career. The fetters of taxation were removed from the Press when he was arriving at manhood's estate, newspapers were multiplying, and he got his foot on the journalistic ladder by becoming a reporter. He mounted to sub-editor, editor, and proprietor, and finally his journalistic interests placed him in the circle of the best known newspaper men in the country. In 1871, as coadjutor with the founder of the *Bolton Evening News*, he founded the *Bolton Journal* and five weekly papers in adjoining towns. These papers, which are flourishing to-day, were used to advocate peace, progress, and reform. His early experience taught him the value of education, and this subject especially engrossed him. He used the Press as a fulcrum for

the achievement of many objects relating to the betterment of the people. He also wrote, spoke, and laboured, and it came about in the course of years that Bolton forgot his Warrington origin and claimed him as one of its foremost townsmen. As a political leader, an



WILLIAM BRIMELOW.

ardent social reformer, a supporter of charitable and kindred organisations, a specialist in educational work, a prominent Free Churchman, and a temperance reformer he seemed inseparable from the public life of the borough. Among Independent Methodists there are now many justices of the peace, but he was almost the first Independent Methodist to hold that position,

being both a borough and county magistrate, and he also declined the honour of being a parliamentary candidate for Westhoughton Division. His twenty-five years' services as hon. secretary for the Westhoughton Division Liberal Association were recognised by the presentation to him of a valuable set of silver plate, and his wife was given a diamond, pearl, and turquoise necklace. All these public activities were outlets for his religious convictions, for his type of a Christian was one who leavened public affairs with Christianity and made the State an instrument for hastening the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

William Brimelow's professional and business career and public offices were enough to absorb the energies of most men, but these did not wean him from Church and Connexional service, nor prevent him being a Connexional leader. His first appearance at an Annual Meeting was in 1866, when he issued a full report of its proceedings in pamphlet form, and the connection thus begun was continued unbroken for forty years. He was a calm and deliberate yet earnest speaker, lucid in exposition, well informed on subjects he advocated, and the Assembly learned to trust his shrewdness of judgment and insight. Able to put a restraint upon himself, he wisely chose his time to intervene in debate. These qualities gave him great authority in the Annual Meeting. The Connexion had only forty-eight Churches and a little over 3,000 members when he attended as delegate from Folds Road Church in 1867, and before he relinquished official Connexional work the number had more than trebled. In 1884 he was elected President. Ten years later he was again elected President, an office he held for three years. In 1868 he was appointed co-editor

of the quarterly Magazine, and the year following it was determined to publish the Magazine monthly, with Bro. Brimelow as editor. This post he most efficiently filled for twenty-eight years. In 1870 he was associated with William Oxley and Robert Entwistle in editing our first Connexionally-owned hymn-book, and thirty years later had the task of completing and issuing the revised Hymnal, his colleague, Robert Entwistle, having died before the work was finished. Both the hymn-book and the Magazine were, as he contemplated, great unifying influences, and he strove effectively in the latter not only to make more efficient the spiritual work of the Churches, but to foster a love for Independent Methodist polity, of which he was a convincing and lucid expositor. "A Free Church and a Free Ministry" was his phrase, and it aptly indicates our denominational type of church polity. For years, too, he used the Annual Meeting platform to expound our principles, and his addresses were ultimately gathered together to form a useful and admirable volume on our principles. Apart from these tangible signs of his Connexional work, in administration he took a great share in revolutionising our methods of Connexional procedure. His experience on the Press and in public life brought home to him the value of organisation. He, therefore, laboured with others to create the machinery which has made our Conference a model for businesslike capacity, and given to the Conference, through the subdivision of labour in committees, direct control over all Connexional work and funds. He won his first battle against prejudice with the organisation of our Connexional evangelistic work. True, a number of Churches stood aside for a time, but they soon learned wisdom and returned to their alle-

giance. He had tenacity of purpose, which enabled him to wait for the psychological moment. For example, at the right moment he wrote a pamphlet which won the Churches (who up to then had borne various names) to the adoption of the title Independent Methodist. The Ministers' Assistance Fund, the Ministers' Education Scheme, and the Extension Fund had his full-hearted support both financially and otherwise. To him, too, was entrusted in 1894 the task of preparing a Model Deed, which, whilst securing our chapel and school property for denominational purposes, gives the Churches the fullest liberty in the management and control of trust property. The creation of the funds named brought their problems of management to the front in 1905, and unfortunately Bro. Brimelow did not find himself in harmony with the majority as to their solution. He ceased to be a member of the Connexional Committee, but the controversy did not prevent the Churches retaining their esteem for him, and as long as strength permitted he went in and out among the Churches, labouring as before. On two occasions the Connexion gave tangible expression to their feeling of appreciation of his labours. In 1890, at Nelson Conference, he was presented with an address along with a drawing-room time-piece and ornaments. Again in 1904 at Liverpool, as a tribute of recognition of his labours in connection with the new Hymnal, there was given to him a fine enlarged photograph of himself, suitably framed and inscribed.

One is justified in saying that the mantle of Peter Phillips fell on William Brimelow, who was greatly influenced by him in his youth. He was born in 1837 in Warrington, and was the eldest son of James

Brimelow, a minister at Friars' Green Church. In this Church and School he grew from childhood to manhood, and in 1860 he married Susan, daughter of Richard Mee. Both he and his wife were always proud to claim that their grandfathers were among the original group who founded Friars' Green Church. At nineteen years of age he was converted, and immediately proved that he was saved to serve. He could not serve by proxy, and the keen sense of personal responsibility for service was the secret of his life-work. He joined Folds Road Church as a member in 1862, became a teacher in the school, was appointed a minister in 1868, and subsequently occupied the position of President of the Church, Sunday School Superintendent and President of the Circuit, in whose growth he took an active part. Physically he was rather over the average height, and until his later years somewhat ascetic in appearance. Puritan in his views, he was a total abstainer, and eschewed the use of tobacco. He gave himself little time for relaxation, following the example of Gladstone in finding recreation in change of occupation. As a preacher he aimed at, and encouraged others also to reach, a high standard in the pulpit ministry. As a preacher he was never stale. The passing years brought him added authority and power in the ministry of the Word, and many blessed memories are associated with his pulpit labours both in Bolton Circuit and the Connexion. At one period he and the late Joseph Settle (a fervid and eloquent preacher) were like "tongues of fire" and channels of Pentecostal blessings, and there were many conversions. He even broke down the prejudice against using manuscript whilst preaching, for he was not gripped by his manu-



script, but gripped by his subject. His sermons were cultured and forceful, readily understood of the "common people," and winning the ear of the well-informed by their lucidity. His pulpit utterances were strengthened by the impression he gave of a sincere personality, but it was in the prayer-meeting that was most disclosed. There his intensity of feeling, which in public was under the control of a superb self-restraint, had free sway. A descriptive writer, giving impressions of the delegates to the first Methodist Ecumenical Conference in London in 1881 (he represented the Connexion at this and the Conferences in 1891 and 1901), observed that he was puzzled whether Bro. Brimelow was more priest than lawyer. He had certainly a legal mind, logically adding point to point, and had a splendid power of concentration on the matter engrossing his attention. Under an outward calm, and in later years a somewhat austere demeanour, there was a burning zeal which, like the apostolic "Woe is me," sustained him to the end.

At the age of seventy-six, after more than half a century's strenuous work, he was gathered to his fathers in June 1913, and our Connexion's interest in his life's work appeared dwarfed by the multiplicity of his other spheres of labour represented at his funeral, amongst those present being the mayor of the town and the vicar of the Parish Church.

He had the sympathetic help of his wife, who survived him, in his work, and four of his six sons came into our ministry.

## CHAPTER VI

### DEVELOPMENT OF CONNEXIONAL ORGANISATION

OUR Churches have ever held to the independence of the Churches—that each was a self-governed community of believers. It is therefore not surprising that for many years there was no attempt at Connexional organisation. The Church receiving the Annual Meeting made the arrangements, as is the custom still, and officers were elected when the meeting was constituted. The representatives held religious services and gave consideration to reports from the Churches, which were often in themselves brief sermons. To use the old Methodist phrase, “they had a good time,” and no doubt went back to their Churches blessed and encouraged. Of hearing sermons our forefathers were never tired. On the Saturday evening of the Conference the religious meetings began, to resume sometimes at five, six, or seven o’clock next morning. At Bolton in 1834, for instance, there was on the Sunday—a sermon at seven o’clock; from ten to twelve, two sermons; a love-feast in the afternoon, and two sermons in the evening. This was followed by preaching on Monday morning and evening and also on Tuesday morning. Whilst services were being held in the chapel, the Welsh brethren spoke to those of their principality in the school-house.

The first Conferences were held at Whitsuntide and then for some years at Easter, reverting back in 1835 to Whitsuntide, until it was decided in 1864 to meet on the third Saturday in June, and continue until the following Tuesday. This latter arrangement has been adhered to, with a little deviation when the Whitsuntide holidays have interfered.

#### APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Ultimately circumstances compelled some form of organisation. It was entered upon very slowly. First, in 1833 the President and Secretary were appointed to continue in office from one Annual Meeting until the next. In 1846 the President was appointed to arbitrate in any disputes referred to him during his term of office, and five years later (1851) five members were appointed to act with the President and Secretary as a Connexional Committee, to transact business in the intervals of the Annual Meetings. As the need was felt new officers were elected. It is, however, significant that the Connexion had passed its Jubilee before a Treasurer was appointed, the first to fill that position being James Firth of Oldham. In that year—1859—a voluntary Contingent Fund was established. Evidently there had been little money to deal with, and the Meeting, as far as one can judge, was chary of asking for it. The Connexional Committee was also at intervals enlarged and made representative of the Circuits until the present arrangement was reached: President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, Evangelistic Secretary, Bookroom Secretary, Ministers' Assistance Fund Secretary, Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Secretary, Finance Secre-

tary, Auditor, and representatives of the following Circuits: Manchester, Warrington, Oldham, Bolton, Wigan, Liverpool, Cleckheaton, Emley, Colne and Nelson, Bingham, Shavington, Northern Counties Confederation, Crewe, Southport, Bristol, Loughborough and Leigh. This Committee divides itself into sections or groups, who all report to the General Committee, which reports yearly to the Annual Meeting.

### FIXING A NAME

Fixing a name for our denomination was a recurring difficulty. Whilst the majority of the Churches have always borne the name of Independent Methodist, they have been willing to join with Churches working on the same principles, but having local designations. All cared more for reality than symbol, and agreed to a descriptive title. Therefore, in 1833 the Union was called "The United Churches of Christ," each Church to retain its own name of Independent Methodist, Quaker Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist Reformers, etc. This title was undisturbed for ten years, although the title-page of the *Minutes* showed sometimes that the Assembly had been held at an Independent Methodist Church. In 1841 William Sanderson, of Liverpool, first appeared at the Annual Assembly, and with his advent may be linked a resolution, passed at Warrington in 1843:

"That to give an identity to our Annual Meeting and as much as possible show what we are, without any Church being required to alter its own designation, we have upon the title-page of our *Minutes*: 'Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Delegates from the United Free Gospel Churches,' and that the title-page of the Magazine be in accordance therewith likewise."

A number of Churches individually adopted the title of "Free Gospel Churches," but the Independent Methodists, the most thriving section, were never satisfied with the departure from the original name. They wished to associate themselves with the great Methodist family in name as well as spirit. The writer himself in 1880 raised the subject in the *Magazine*, and had a strong rebuff and solemn warning, but as years sped on the anomaly of having different local names such as Free Gospel, Christian Brethren, Gospel Pilgrims, Lay Churches, was more clearly seen. At last, in 1898, by a unanimous vote, to a great extent secured by a pamphlet written by William Brimelow, the Annual Meeting resumed its original name of Independent Methodist and the Churches undertook to preface their local names with this title, if they retained them.

#### MODEL DEED

Another unifying force originated in 1853, when William Sanderson moved and James Seddon seconded : "That the Testimony and Principles of Union be adopted." This exposition was prepared by Alexander Denovan, and, as was to be expected, there was some difficulty over this doctrinal declaration. Churches looked askance at it, afraid of independence of thought and action being interfered with. Twelve Churches seceded, chiefly in the Warrington District, and met separately each year until in 1860, at Manchester, John Knowles acting as intermediary, a reconciliation took place, and the Annual Assembly generously restored the Churches to their old positions in the list.

It was not enough to define the doctrinal position of our Churches. If property were built with the inten-

tion that these views should be propagated it was necessary to secure this by deed. As early as 1824 three Manchester friends had a "Deed of Settlement for Independent Methodist Chapels" prepared. It was approved by the Annual Meeting and lodged in the hands of the Manchester friends. It served as a model for some Churches, but great looseness prevailed. Then a form of Model Deed appeared in the Magazine for December 1860, which the Annual Meeting approved, and commended to the Churches. This deed, without interfering with the internal government of the Churches, secures the property to Independent Methodism. Since then the matter has received much attention, and a form of deed, further improved and modernised, was enrolled in Chancery in 1894, which makes the trust deeds modelled upon it much simpler and less expensive, in addition to forging the bond of union more firmly. It was the lack of such a bond for the first half of our existence as a Connexion that led to many losses. In recent years, by the formation of an Independent Methodist Association, of which all the members of the Connexional Committee are entitled to be members, a perpetual corporate trustee has been secured.

Some sixty years ago a policy was developed, and it has never weakened since, that whilst Churches should be steadfast to their independence they should also loyally show the spirit of mutual helpfulness and combined effort. New men appeared in the Annual Meeting. Fortunately they combined with evangelistic zeal business capacity and knowledge of church organisation. Standing Orders were arranged, and the questions for the Annual Meeting business framed. Business method was introduced, and, as affairs have

multiplied, the application of the principle of devolution has prevented the necessity of the Annual Meeting sitting for more than two days for business.

In 1881, representatives of the Lay Churches, Sunderland, appeared in our Annual Meeting. Eventually they became federated as the Northern Counties Federation, and elect representatives to our Annual Assembly—an arrangement which may eventually commend itself as worthy of imitation in preference to the present system of representation of individual Churches.

The Annual Meetings of the past few years have afforded much evidence of the growing friendliness among the Free Churches. For a number of years representatives of the Wesleyan Reform Union have sat in the meetings and an interchange of pulpits has been maintained. It has also been decided to join the Federation of Free Churches.

### OUR GROWTH

Data are not available for giving in full the figures showing the growth of our Connexion in Churches and membership, as until 1864 the figures are not reliable.

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers.</i>	<i>Members.</i>
1808 . . .	16	—	1,199
1814 . . .	36	—	—
1824 . . .	31	—	—
1834 . . .	34	—	—
1844 . . .	29	—	—
1854 . . .	46	—	—
1864 . . .	57	188	2,730
1874 . . .	80	249	3,538
1884 . . .	97	290	5,089
1894 . . .	118	337	6,773
1904 . . .	143	383	8,799
1914 . . .	147	411	8,908
1918 . . .	145	377	9,216

## OUR PRESENT NUMERICAL POSITION

There are now 145 Churches and 14 missions, with 9,261 members. The ministers total 378. In our 159 Sunday Schools there are 2,959 teachers and 25,432 scholars. The value of chapel and school property is £268,770, with a debt of £52,893. In the chapels there is seating accommodation for 47,770.

There are 25 Circuits, and the Churches are situated in the following counties :

Cheshire	.	.	.	.	.	13
Durham	.	.	.	.	.	27
Gloucestershire	.	.	.	.	.	5
Lancashire	.	.	.	.	.	87
Leicestershire	.	.	.	.	.	1
Nottinghamshire	.	.	.	.	.	6
Northumberland	.	.	.	.	.	4
Ramsey	.	.	.	.	.	1
Shropshire	.	.	.	.	.	2
Staffordshire	.	.	.	.	.	1
Scotland	.	.	.	.	.	1
Yorkshire	.	.	.	.	.	11



## CHAPTER VII

### LEGAL STATUS OF OUR MINISTRY

#### HOW OUR MINISTERS ARE APPOINTED

**I**N 1916 when the Conscription Act was passed there was a controversy with the War Office as to the status of our ministers, as the Act gave ministers exemption. Some of our ministers were summoned before tribunals who were apparently astonished that any one who was following a secular occupation could be regarded as a minister. The attention of the War Office was called to the matter by the Connexional Secretary (James Vickers) who received a reply from W. H. J. Tennant, M.P., then War Office Secretary, dated March 21, 1916, stating :

“The authorities are agreed that the term ‘regular minister of any religious denomination’ in par. 4, Schedule I of the Military Service Act includes the ministers to whom you refer in your letter, and they are, therefore, excepted from the operation of the Act.”

Notwithstanding this letter, various tribunals refused exemption, but each case was brought under the notice of the War Office (W. Price giving valuable assistance) with the result that in every instance the

objecting local tribunals were overruled. This caused much correspondence, inconvenience, and delay. Therefore an agreement was reached with the War Office that a test case should be arranged. Arthur Howell, of Moorside, Swinton, was therefore summoned before the county magistrates at Strangeways, Manchester, on June 4, 1917. The magistrates had no hesitation in at once admitting that our Churches were in a denomination, and then devoted themselves to the consideration of the status of Howell. The Connexional Secretary (James Vickers) gave evidence that before appointment Independent Methodist ministers had generally a three years' course of study, being provided with books and tutors. If a student passed three years' examinations successfully he was, if the Church so decided, adopted as minister by his Church, who then nominated him as a circuit minister. The Circuit Committee next subjected him to a theological examination, and, if approved, he was put on full plan and his Church formally recognised him at a special service. Independent Methodist Churches, he said, aimed at a plural ministry. The ministers were attached to a particular Church (indeed each Church freely elected its ministers), but they were also circuit ministers and preached at all the circuit churches, and often in adjoining circuits. Arthur Howell followed this witness and testified to his Church having appointed him as a minister, and the circuit as a circuit minister. A recognition service followed, and not an ordination, as the Church did not believe in that. He acted as a minister without fee or reward, and neither he nor other Independent Methodist ministers used the title of Reverend. Finally the magistrates stopped the trial and the chairman said that the bench had come

to the conclusion that Howell was "a regular minister of a religious denomination" coming within the exception provided by the Military Service Act. The result of the decision was that all our ministers of military age who applied were exempted.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ANNUAL MEETING GROUP, 1874

THIS is the first photograph of an Annual Meeting group of representatives. It gives photographs that recall vividly to memory a generation which did much to build up the denomination. There are sixty-eight in the group, of whom only six are now living: Matthew Kennedy, James Vickers, T. Barton, H. Jackson, T. Backhouse, Joseph Hesford.

The positions of Alexander Denovan and William Sanderson are typical of the influence they have wielded in our Churches. Fifty-two years before (1822) Alexander Denovan made his first appearance at the Annual Meeting, and was at once recognised as a commanding personality. For sixty years he preached the Gospel. Ready for the great Reaper, he was gathered home on October 24, 1878, in his eighty-sixth year. William Oxley, who stands just behind William Sanderson, married one of Alexander Denovan's daughters, and was, like his father-in-law, in turn first Secretary and then President of the Connexion. Opposite Denovan is the familiar figure of William Sanderson, prominent for over fifty years, and who for more than sixty years laboured in the ministry, dying in January, 1899, in his eighty-eighth year.

Behind these fathers in Israel range men who in their spheres were equally potent for good. Close to T. Stowe, of Nelson, is Thomas Lister, the hymn-





*Photo by]*

W. Widdup. T. Holmes. J. Lan-  
 S. Dewhurst. W. Boone. N. Secker. W. Smith. J. Vickers. T.  
 H. Jackson. T. Haigh. J. Wild. W. Hardman. T. Barton. J. Davies  
 R. Eatock. T. Foulds. J. Higson. J. Clough. T. Cowgill. T. Dobson.  
 J. Halliday. H. Whitmore. P. Fearnley. J. Brown. T. Worthington. W. Br.  
 J. Tessiman. R. Ratcliffe. M. Mullineux. T. Cooke. J. Seddon. J.  
 S. Cawley. A. Denovan.

T COLNE, 1874.



[J. Wilkinson & Co., Colne.

more. J. Hail.  
 . Spencer. J. Settle. G. Ward. M. Kennedy. R. Foulds.  
 N. Edmondson. T. Adshead. H. Robertshaw. J. Holt. J. J. Bailie.  
 ackhouse. W. Lyon. R. Pinder. R. McNaught. J. Hesford. C. Fildes.  
 ering. W. Wright. J. Proe. W. Fazackerley. T. Handley. J. Hudlass.  
 Oxley. G. Winterburn. J. Firth. T. Lush. T. Lister. T. Stow.  
 W. Sanderson.





writer, of Baildon Green. Then there is James Firth of Oldham, the first Connexional Treasurer, and next to him is George Winterburn, of Bolton, who succeeded him as Treasurer, and was a financial pillar when new financial departures were being made. In the centre is John Knowles, who for a period was a Connexional Evangelist. James Seddon, of Oldham, stands next to him, and he also at three different periods went out as an evangelist. Thomas Cooke (Sindsley) and Matthew Mullineux (Roe Green), who are side by side, were representative preachers of a type which has almost gone. They were men of one Book—the Bible. Thomas Cooke delighted to sing its truths, and Matthew preached it with a picturesqueness all his own. His hand is on the shoulder of Samuel Cawley, of Shipley. “Sammy,” though diminutive in stature, was a preacher of no mean repute, having the gift with all the Yorkshire fire.

Near to them is William Brimelow (who as editor, hymnal compiler, and in other directions did splendid work), with Thomas Worthington as his bosom friend and co-worker. Next to W. Brimelow is Jasper Isterling, who lived until he was over eighty and was venerated by the Liverpool Churches. In the second row is our present Secretary. Some will remember Jeremiah Halliday, of Bradford; John Landless, of Nelson; and, of a later decade, Thomas Foulds and James Holt, the spiritual builders of Colne Churches. Then there are Matthew Kennedy, who rendered especially distinguished service as evangelist; Joshua Hudlass, of Bolton; William Fazackerley, of Pendleton; William Lyon, of Southport; and Thomas Adshhead, of Stockport; all well-known preachers in their day.

## CHAPTER IX

# BASIC PRINCIPLES OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

IN succeeding chapters will be given an exposition, with Scripture references, of the distinctive position of Independent Methodist Churches, and here it is convenient to outline briefly yet freely what we esteem are basic principles of a New Testament Church. They show us that a New Testament Church is the type of a universal Church, not rigid but adaptable. Such a Church acknowledges four great principles, and they are these :

### FELLOWSHIP

1. *Jesus Christ founded a Fellowship.* He based His teaching on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. God is our Father : all people of all lands are His children. " If any," said Christ, " come to Me I will in no wise cast them out," and that coming meant, to still use His words, " That they all may be as one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." A Unity in Trinity. Christ appealed to us, as free beings, to accept Him as our Saviour, and promised to be our Friend : " Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." He also said, " Call no man master ; ye are brethren." The sign that those

who accept Him are in the company of friends is this: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one for another." Thus Christ created a fellowship, or brotherhood. Because the disciples loved Christ they loved each other, and they therefore met together to have fellowship, or, as Paul puts it, "they joined in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, having melody in their hearts," and worshipped Christ.

Dr. Hodgkin, Mission Secretary to the Society of Friends, in his latest book, says: "Undoubtedly Jesus meant to establish a universal fellowship. Though in His own lifetime He limited His activities very largely to His own nation, His eye was ever on the world, the 'other sheep' who were to come into the one flock. His immediate followers so far got hold of this thought as to be able to break away, intensely difficult as it was for them, from the traditions of one of the most narrowly national tribes known to history. The international idea is an integral part of Christianity."

## RIGHTS

2. *Those who were in the Fellowship had Rights.* Christ said to them, "The truth shall make you free," and Paul's teaching included this: "Come into the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." All in the Fellowship were free. Paul knew what redemption had accomplished for him. It had caused him to see that "God had made of one blood all the nations of the earth," that men of every nation were his brethren, and that there was neither bond nor free, male nor female, Jew nor Greek in Christ Jesus. Thus he burst the bonds of Jewish narrowness and set aside the ceremonies and superstitions of the Jewish Church,

for he recognised that all who accepted Christ were members of the royal priesthood, and Christ was the great High Priest. They were high-born because free-born. To such a company Paul wrote: "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." They were free souls, free to follow the Light. They sought the Light, and acted accordingly. The first company of Christ's disciples cast lots, and filled the place of Judas; they appointed Stephen and the deacons. Afterwards it pleased the Apostles and elders and the *whole Church* to send men of their own company to Antioch. All along we find the believers exercising their rights—the Church (that is, the Fellowship, was the seat of government), and the members appointed ministers, admitted members, disciplined members, collected funds, administered funds, and took advantage of their individual right and call to witness for the Truth. It was felt to be a high responsibility to be an officer in the Fellowship, and the Apostle Peter warned those who were called to office in these words: "The elders (bishops, pastors, overseers) therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder, tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight not of constraint, but willingly according unto God, nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as lording it over God's heritage, but making yourselves examples to the flock." He thus reminds us that the authority of the bishop or minister of a Church was one of character, and that character had to be unselfish. We cannot imagine an early Church, say at Ephesus, meeting together, and, observing that a Church at Corinth had a very successful minister, resolving to send him an invitation to become their minister, urging, "Your Church can only afford to

give you £400 a year, but we can pay our minister £600." No such huckstering spirit existed. Ministers were not then bought with money. No, they were free, democratic communities, exercising the rights of self-government and finding within the society men and women able to carry on the work of God.

### RESPONSIBILITY

3. *The Members of the Fellowship had Responsibilities.* Privilege and responsibility are always linked. Christ was the Master, and He said: "Ye are the light of the world," and enjoined them to "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and so glorify your Father which is in heaven." He gave them the assurance, "If ye confess Me before men I will confess you before My Father in heaven." Further, He left with them the command: "preach the Gospel to every creature." He made it plain that, as they had freely received the Gospel, they had freely to give it. All understood there could be no proxy in Christian service. If a believer had only one talent it must be used and not hidden in a napkin. If any had the gift of preaching, that gift must be exercised; so with evangelising, and of teaching. Therefore, in every city there arose preachers and confessors of the truth. There was the local ministry and the universal (evangelistic) ministry. Those who were in either ministry had the call felt by the Apostle: "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation unto every one who believeth." It was not an outward call, but an inward constraint. Paul was moved by it. "The love of Christ," he said, "constraineth me." It was

an inward force that compelled; not an external pressure, but an inward yearning.

#### OPPORTUNITY

4. *The Members of the Fellowship had Opportunity to fulfil Responsibility.* Those in the Fellowship never dreamt of saying, "There may be half a dozen men or women in this Church upon whom God has laid the responsibility of preaching, but only one must preach, and he must exercise that right to the exclusion of others." The one-man ministry practically says that, for where there is the one-man ministry there is an interference with personal responsibility. There is a restriction of the free, spiritual life of the Christian fellowship. All who feel constrained to preach, of course, prove to the Church that they have the call to preach, and then they must have liberty. Privilege and responsibility go together, and the privilege is that all should serve as they are best fitted, minister, school superintendent, teacher, visitor, and so on. Christ is ever calling for labourers in His vineyard, and, whilst the labourers are few, the harvest is great. We repeat there is no proxy in Christian work. The vital principle is this, that if spiritual gifts be bestowed they should be used, and there should be freedom and opportunity to use them. The responsibility is laid upon the rich and upon the poor. Ease and wealth tempt men in their inward heart to cry, "Rid me of this sense of responsibility." But a rich man cannot pay another to do his spiritual work. If a man has wealth he is doubly responsible, for he is also steward of his wealth as well as of his spiritual gifts.

In a sentence, the New Testament Church is revealed

to us as a fellowship in which the members have (1) liberty, (2) rights, (3) responsibility, and (4) opportunity. The Church is a society to develop character, to give service, and to be a witness for Christ.

As Dr. Dale argues, "The great contention of Congregationalism is not that every Christian man has a *right* to share in the government of the Church, but that every Christian man is directly *responsible* to Christ for securing in the discipline, doctrine, and worship of the Church the supremacy of its divine Founder and Lord. This responsibility rests upon the wonderful union between Christ and all those who are restored to God through Him. He is the life of their life; He reveals Himself through them. The *right* of all church members to take part in the government of the Church is an inference; they cannot discharge their responsibility unless the right is conceded."<sup>1</sup>

We are glad to subscribe to the declaration of the newly-formed Federation of Free Churches, which says:

"We affirm the sovereign authority of our Lord Jesus Christ over every department of human life, and we hold that individuals and peoples are responsible to Him in their several spheres and are bound to render Him obedience and to seek always the furtherance of His Kingdom upon earth, not, however, in any way constraining belief, imposing religious disabilities, or denying the rights of conscience."

We are also in accord (with the explanation subjoined) with the Federation declaration as to the ministry. It sets forth:

"The Ministry is an office within the Church—not a sacerdotal order—instituted for the preaching of the Word, the ministration of the Sacraments and the care of souls.

<sup>1</sup> Dale, *A Manual of Congregational Principles*, p. 62.

It is a vocation from God, upon which therefore no one is qualified to enter save through the call of the Holy Spirit in the heart; and this inward call is to be authenticated by the call of the Church, which is followed by ordination to the work of the Ministry in the name of the Church. While thus maintaining the Ministry as an office, we do not limit the ministries of the New Testament to those who are thus ordained, but affirm the priesthood of all believers and the obligation resting upon them to fulfil their vocation according to the gift bestowed upon them by the Holy Spirit."

Our interpretation of "ordination" is simply that of a form of recognition, and that it is not essential to the observance of the Lord's Supper that a minister should preside.<sup>1</sup>

In the new issue of the *Magazine* in January 1847 the editor (Alex. Denovan) had a prefatory note as to our ministry, which we may well transcribe:

"The ministry to which we adhere, being like that of the first Christians, we believe that the Church has within itself, under its great Head, all that is necessary for making 'increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love,' and that, if faithful, God, by His Holy Spirit, will still 'give gifts to men' for such a glorious purpose—to qualify them as His instruments for the conviction and conversion of sinners, 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ' (Eph. iv. 11-16; 1 Cor. xii. 1-6); and believing these things we require all among us to add to their 'faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge,' etc., and when they receive 'the gift,' while subject to their brethren, to minister the same one to another' (2 Pet. i. 5, 6; Heb. v. 12; Rom. xii. 6-8; 1 Cor. xiv. 1-3, 24; 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11; v. 1-5). Missionaries sent forth by us, having their whole time occupied in travelling, preaching, etc., like the Apostles and Evangelists originally commissioned by our Lord,

<sup>1</sup> Dale, *A Manual of Congregational Principles*, p. 154: "An ordained minister is not necessary to give validity to the service."



have liberty to 'live of the Gospel' (1 Cor. ix. 1-14, compared with Matt. x. 1-14, and Luke x. 1-8). But all other ministers maintain themselves and their families according to the instructions given by Paul to bishops in Acts xx. 33-35, and in Phil. i. 1, read with verses 17-19 of chap. iii. and verse 9 of chap. iv., unless through affliction or old age they are unable to do so. See also 2 Thess. iii. 6-15; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Acts xx. 28-31; Titus i. 10, 11. In such circumstances (old age, affliction, etc.) of distress, 'food and raiment' are communicated to them according to the ability of the churches of whom they have had the oversight, agreeably to the following Scripture, viz., 'Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine' (1 Tim. v. 17); 'honour' signifying relief and relief implying that the person who requires it is in need (compare 1 Tim. v. 3 with v. 16. See also Gal. vi. 6, which compare with Heb. xiii. 16 and Phil. iv. 15-18)."

## CHAPTER X

### THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ORGANISATION

WE agree that the Church Christ founded was not a state, a hierarchy, a coercive authority, a kingdom of this world, but a spiritual society consisting of those who, by faith in Christ Himself, are joined to Him. Faith in Christ and love for one another make the Church. Christ founded a universal Church, or, to use the modern phrase, a holy, Catholic Church, a Church composed of redeemed men and women and acknowledging Him as their Saviour. United to Christ, they unite with their fellow believers to live as Christ taught them and grow up in all things into Christ, their living Head. The members of such a Church, the Apostle Paul says, are members of Christ's body. It is recorded in the New Testament that wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name there is the Church. Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom, said: "Wherever Christ Jesus may be there is the Catholic Church," and Irenæus re-echoes him in the declaration, "Where the Church is there also is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is there is the Church." Believers in Christ formed themselves into communities, the ecclesia, and had perfect local autonomy.

## INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

All the early Churches were independent of one another so far as their internal organisation and authority and administration of their affairs were concerned. Even an Apostle could not be received unless the Church consented (3 John 9).

All the Churches were one body because one spirit united them. They formed one Church because they recognised that every member was necessary to each other. There was a unity of life, but not of external organisation. Each Church elected its officers and directed its own affairs. By show of hands (Acts xiv. 23) they elected elders. Paul taught them in the parable of the body (1 Cor. xii. 12-30) that the humblest believer is as necessary for the perfect working of the Church as its most gifted officer. No one is without some gift of grace, and to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal (1 Cor. xii. 7). These first Churches appointed officers (Acts xiv. 23), exercised discipline (2 Cor. ii. 5-11), sent forth missionaries (Acts xi. 22), sent delegates to each other (1 Cor. xvi. 3), and in many ways functioned as Churches.

In a word, a Church is a company of believers with Christ as its Head. It is self-contained, and united by the same spirit and object to others with like spirit and object. Not a glimpse is found in the New Testament of ecclesiastical ceremonies, of formal acceptance of council-creeds, or compulsory submission to rules of external authorities. All in the membership were equal: "Neither bond nor free, neither male nor female in Christ Jesus," one big family, and no distinction of sex. But as communities they

had affinity to each other. In the fellowship of the Churches, whether merely in synagogue, in house, or elsewhere, there was the universal Church. "What was in the whole was in the part, and what was in the part was in the whole."

### NO SACERDOTALISM

It was to individual Churches Paul directed his epistles, and their ministers he addressed as fellow elders. There is no indication of the myth, which Dr. Lightfoot has exploded in his *Dissertation on the Apostolic Age*, of Apostolic Succession. Dr. Lightfoot had forced upon him, by study of the New Testament, the conclusion that "Consciously or unconsciously, the idea of a universal priesthood, of the religious equality of all men, which, though not untaught before, was first embodied in the Church of Christ, has worked and is working untold blessings in political institutions and in social life." But, he rightly adds: "As individuals, all these are priests alike. As members of a corporation (that is, a Church), they have their several and distinct offices."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Horton, in his *Early Christian Church*, tells us that "The primitive communities, as we see them in the Acts of the Apostles and the earlier letters of the Apostles, are societies of believers in Christ, organised in the simplest way under the guidance of elders, ministered unto by their own brethren as each was directed by the Spirit, exercising a powerful influence and discipline upon all who joined them, preserving the fellowship in love of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and all that it implied." Further, he asserts:

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, p. 4.

“ The Apostles had no special authority in the Church ; their influence rested only on moral weight (Gal. ii. 6). There were forms for recognising the appointment of officers, but not the slightest semblance of the ideas imported into the modern interpretation of ordination. Ordination then meant the laying on of hands, either by the Church or its elders, that being the symbolical sign by which the congregation set forth the appointment of men and women to certain duties.”

Dr. Hort fully supports this view, and observes<sup>1</sup> : “ In a word, the early Churches were autonomous and self-governed.”

#### NOT UNDER STATE CONTROL

The fundamental conception of the Church as above outlined does not allow any subjection of the Church to the State. If we substitute the words “ Independent Methodism ” for Congregationalism, Dr. Dale pertinently and concisely puts our views :

“ It is of the very substance of Congregationalism that the civil authority has no authority over the faith, discipline, or worship of the Church. The denial of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown was the crime for which the early Congregational martyrs were sent to the gallows. In recent times it has become the universal conviction of Congregationalists that a Church cannot receive support from the State without sacrificing some measure of its spiritual freedom, and that a Church must, therefore, decline to accept political privilege and maintenance from national revenue in order to preserve its loyalty to Christ.” ■

<sup>1</sup> Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Dale, *A Manual of Congregational Principles*, p. 191.

## CHAPTER XI

### AN UNPAID MINISTRY

**I**NDEPENDENT Methodism has always had an unpaid ministry. It believes in Christ's words, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Like the early Churches, too, it has sought a plural ministry, and that fact, conjoined with the acceptance of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, makes payment unnecessary. Christ abolished a separated priesthood by constituting all believers priests. In the New Testament ministry there is no priesthood, as is put forward to-day: "In no single feature, aspect, or office was it a sacerdotal Church."<sup>1</sup> A Church does not exist for its officers: they are its servants, and feel it is a privilege to be so. Organisation in some form there must be. In New Testament times the organisation was of a simple type. The members of the Ecclesia (company of believers) followed the type of the Jewish Synagogue and elected elders, who were styled bishops or presbyters. Their number was usually twelve, and each one in turn presided over the services, so that all might be done decently and in order. Bishop means overseer, and not all the bishops had the gift of preaching. But all were overseers. There was no set order of public worship, and no set

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 533.

form of prayer. In 1 Cor. xiv. there is a picture of elders or bishops, and the brethren or sisters joining in a service—prayers, singing of psalms, and preaching (prophesying). An elder could speak or pray. He had the same right as other members, but no more. Those who had the gift of prophesying naturally had the leadership, and were deferred to by their hearers as being “worthy of double honour,” because they laboured in Word and doctrine.

### A PLURAL MINISTRY

To the elders were added others. The Apostle Paul enumerates those in the ministry as apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors, deacons, exhorters, rulers, healing, governments. Paul had no idea of a one-man ministry. In later centuries we find a ministry which confined itself principally to preaching and pastoral work.

But it is certain that in the first century the ministry was a plural one, and did not separate those who exercised it from their ordinary avocations. There was no paid local ministry. Further, it is equally certain that in the apostolic period there was no episcopal government. After the first century of Christianity attention was turned to the Old Testament priesthood, and the teaching of Christ was ignored. Thus, the priest emerged with his ecclesiastical claims, which have flowered into an infallible Pope. The late Dr. Fairbairn rightly affirms that a period came when there was “incorporated with the Church religious ideas which changed it from a system priestless and spiritual into one sacerdotal and sensuous.” Further, he is of opinion that, “there is nothing so proves the divinity of Christ as His being

able to live and still to act within forms so little congenial to His spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

We, as Independent Methodists, seek to conform to the original conceptions of the ministry, and what they were, I subjoin brief citations from various writers :

#### MINISTERS AND THEIR LIVELIHOOD

The late Dr. Hatch, a dignitary of the Church of England, says in his *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*, that during the first two centuries of Christianity the ordinary member of the Church could (1) teach or preach, (2) baptize, (3) preside at the Lord's Supper, (4) exercise discipline. He adds : “ There is no early trace of the later idea that buying and selling, handicraft and farming, were in themselves inconsistent with the office of a Christian minister. The bishops and presbyters of those early days kept banks, practised medicine, wrought as silversmiths, tended sheep, or sold goods in open market. . . . They were men of the world, taking part in the ordinary business of life.”

Professor T. M. Lindsay, in his *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, supports Dr. Hatch by the declaration, “ There is no trace of one man, one pastor, at the head of the community.” The Professor also writes :

“ The idea that when men are once set apart for the function of office-bearer in the Christian Church it becomes the duty of the Church to provide them with the necessities of life, does not belong to the times of primitive Christianity. The office-bearers of the early Church were clergy in virtue of the call, election, and setting apart by special prayer for sacred office, but **they** worked at trades,

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn's *Christ and Modern Theology*, p. 110.



carried on mercantile pursuits, and were not separate from the laity in their every-day life. We find bishops who were shepherds, weavers, lawyers, ship-builders, and so on, and the elders and deacons were almost invariably men who were not supported by Churches to which they belonged. An interesting series of inscriptions was found on the gravestones of the cemetery of the little town of Corycus in Cilicia Tracheia, records of the Christian community there. They can scarcely be older than the fifth and not later than the sixth century. One of them marks the burial-place of a master potter and another that of a goldsmith, both of whom were elders or presbyters of the Church there."

Albert Barnes, in his Commentary, agrees with this and asserts his conviction that "Ministers should be willing to labour in any proper calling, and think it no degradation to make shoes, cut corn, plough, or keep cattle. It is no dishonour to work hard, and it is not well for a man to enter the ministry wholly unacquainted with every other way of procuring an honest living."

The late Dr. Fairbairn, first Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, weightily declares :

"Christ called no disciple priest, endowed none with priestly functions, made His collective society a holy and spiritual priesthood, but did not establish within it any priestly class. A completer act of abolition was impossible, or one of mightier significance. The religious teachers of those days were without official sanctities. For once in the history of man there was a religion without a priesthood ; men speaking of God in reasonable words to reasonable men. There was no religious caste, no rites too holy for the multitude. All the brethren were saints, all saints brethren, and to the pure all things were pure, to the holy men all mysteries were open and free. Then the Gospel was preached, and the men who believed lived ; by speech and life the new religion lived and moved."

E. E. Genner, M.A., in his recent book, *The Church in the New Testament*, says :

“Bishops, elders, and deacons in the New Testament were ordinary men, with their livelihood to win in the ordinary way ; they were not separated unto the Gospel of God as were the Apostles, nor had they any claims to the community’s support as had the apostles and prophets, unless they were so poor and feeble as to need assistance from the poor funds, or unless they were also prophets and teachers and gave all their time to the work.”

William Arthur, M.A., a godly Methodist, sets forth, in his *Tongue of Fire* :

“To constitute a Christian, three things are necessary : faith, experience, and practice ; to constitute a minister four : faith, experience, practice, and gifts. Where the primitive training is maintained, all the members of the Church exercise such gifts as the Spirit has distributed to them—prayer, exhortation, and teaching, and mutual speaking one to another, and admonishing one another. Among the working believers of such ■ Scriptural Church a suitable proportion will ever be raised up whose gifts will fit them to lead in all offices. This is the real training-school for Christian agents ; a fruitful Church is her own nursery. Meetings for the fellowship of saints, for free-hearted prayer, for exhortation, are the legitimate means by which they whom the Lord is fitting for His high ministry shall be led to the development of their gifts.”

#### THE APOSTLE PAUL’S PRACTICE AND EXAMPLE

Those who read the Epistles of Paul find ample confirmation of the foregoing. Later, the universal ministry (apostles or evangelists) will have notice, but we now limit our reference to the local ministry. Paul, whilst staying in one place, followed his occupation as a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 3). He also strongly inculcated the duty of earning a livelihood whilst do-

ing Christian work. "If any will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10). He pointed to his own example (2 Thess. iii. 7-9), declaring that he had worked night and day so as not to be a burden and to be an example to them. His personal experience was also given to the elders (bishops) of Miletus, (Acts xx. 33-5): "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" The Apostle Peter also reinforces Paul by his exhortation to the local ministry: "Not to labour for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "What, then, is my reward? That when I preach the Gospel I may make the Gospel without charge." The principle was fully appreciated by himself and fellow Jews.

Dr. Montefiore, a learned Jew, in his *Hibbert Lectures* (1892) says:

"Unlike the priests, the Rabbis made no profit from their calling as teachers, and, indeed, repudiated the *sinful idea* [the italics are mine] that the Law, as they expressed it, should be made a spade wherewith to dig. They were thus compelled to turn for their subsistence to ordinary occupations and handicrafts. But though doubtless the ideal was to have little business and be busied in the Torah (the Law), Rabbi Gamaliel, son of Judah, the Prince, was wont to say: 'Excellent is the study of the Law combined with some worldly occupation, for the labour demanded by both makes sin to be forgotten. All study of the Torah without work must in the end be futile and become a cause of sin.' To this day . . . every family [Jewish] in all ranks of society is proud to possess some member who is learned in

the Torah. To the Jew the Law, with its study, has been the great spiritual stimulus. It has saved him from sacerdotalism and priestcraft."

This is a very illuminating passage, for not only does it show that Paul would be familiar with the ideal of free and unremunerated labour for the truth, but his following a trade and preaching in the synagogue would not be considered exceptional or extraordinary. Neither would it surprise any one that the early ministers of the Gospel followed various occupations, professions, and handicrafts.

#### NO FINANCIAL CONTRACT WITH A MINISTER

Of course there are records of church offertories, but Tertullian writes: "Even if there does exist a common fund it is not made up of fees, as though we contracted for our worship." With these offerings the poor people were fed, the orphans and aged cared for, those who were shipwrecked succoured, and those who were imprisoned or sentenced to the mines because of their confession of Christ were aided.

It is true that instances are recorded where the bishops or elders received help from Churches, but only as help and not as payment. Professor Harnack is very emphatic on this point. Writing of the period when the presiding bishop was emerging into prominence over his fellow elders in the local Church—when the first stones in the ecclesiastical fabric which has so obscured primitive teaching and practice were being laid—Harnack observes: "When a Church had chosen permanent officials for itself these also assumed the right of being allowed to claim a livelihood, but only so far as their official duties made inroads upon their

civil occupation.” This assumption was resisted, and is not in consonance with early practice. An instructive passage, which Harnack quotes from the *Clementine Homilies*, proves that even this conditional support was disputed. The passage reads :

“Zaccheus alone has devoted himself to your interests ; he needs food, and yet has no time to provide for himself. How, then, is he to get the requisite provisions for a livelihood ? Is it not reasonable that you should all provide for his support ? Do not wait for him to ask you—asking is a beggar’s rôle, and he would rather die than stoop to that. Shall not you also incur punishment for failing to consider that ‘ the labourer is worthy of his hire ’ ? Let no one say, ‘ Then is the Word which is given freely to be sold ? ’ God forbid. If any man has means and yet accepts any help *he sells the Word*. But there is no sin in a man without means accepting support in order to live, as the Lord accepted gifts at supper and among His friends, He who had nothing though He was the Lord of all things. Honour, then, in appropriate fashion the elders, catechists, useful deacons, respectable widows and orphans as children of the Church.”

This letter makes it obvious that the claim for maintenance of the settled ministry was only on the ground of poverty, and not of right. Ministers were put in the same category as widows and orphans, who all along had been helped from the common fund. Eventually the “ bishop ” so enlarged his powers over this common fund, of which he was in charge, that he appropriated larger proportions to his own use. But that was not primitive usage, and for the first four centuries there are records of the local ministry following various occupations.

The knowledge of this did not die, and it is recorded of the Waldenses, that brave body of people, who, amid the darkness of superstition in the twelfth cen-

ture, shed the light of truth. Gilly, their historian, says: "They preached a free ministry, and their ministers followed trades, especially physic and surgery, that they might not be burdensome." Later still, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* tells of one William Thorpe, who was burnt at the stake in 1407. In his examination before the Bishop of Canterbury he said: "In the new covenant neither Christ nor His apostles took tithes of the people, nor commanded the people to pay tithes to the priests or deacons, but after the Ascension the Apostles laboured with their hands." History supplies us with plenty of warrant for asserting that any reproduction of a New Testament Church must have an unpaid ministry. Some plead that Christ never forbade payment. As to such a plea it is pertinent to observe. Why are Christians agreed that slavery is condemned by Christ? He never forbade slavery, but the Christian Church has seen that Christ taught principles which forbid it. So in Christ's teaching the principle of self-sacrifice stands out prominently, and the early Church had no doubts about its application, and condemned those who tried to make gain out of preaching the Gospel as "Christ traffickers"—they had none of Christ's spirit. Against the negative can be set the positive. There is no proof that Christ commanded a paid ministry. Certainly Paul thought Christ forbade it, and quoted Christ's words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

#### ONE STANDARD OF SERVICE FOR ALL

The peculiarity of modern writers on the local ministry is that they almost invariably avoid any reference to Scriptural authority for its pecuniary support: and further, those in the ministry occa-

sionally lament that they receive a salary. None preach from the text, "These hands ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me." As our ministers imitate the Apostles, they teach that all should follow the example they set, and therefore enjoin that Sunday-school teachers and officers, organists, choirs, and all who contribute in Church effort should do it on the unpaid basis. "You have received without payment, give without payment" (Matt. x. 8, 9, 10, Weymouth's version). Therefore, as a general rule, we have no paid organists or choirs. The standard to reach for all is unpaid service.

## CHAPTER XII

### A MISSIONARY MINISTRY

MUCH of what is in the New Testament respecting the ministry is misunderstood, because the fact is not remembered that there was a universal ministry as well as a local ministry. Commenting on 1 Corinthians, Dr. Lightfoot says: "We have here both an itinerant and a localised ministry; the former consisting mainly of apostles and prophets, and the functions of the two shading off into one another, so that it is not easy to draw the lines between them." Bearing this fact in mind, New Testament passages relating to the material support of the ministry make it definite that support is only to be given to the universal missionary agency. *The Teaching of the Apostles*, which was written at the end of the first century, makes this clear. "If the apostle should ask for money he is a false prophet": the prophet had simply to be helped on his way. This universal missionary ministry comprised the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers, who founded Churches and encouraged those already in existence. Though varying in title they all come under one heading, "one who is sent," an emissary, a missionary. These missionaries were a bond of unity. The communities they gathered together or which they helped were units in



a universal Church, and in their activities (thinks Dr. Harnack) is the explanation of the consciousness of homogeneity which existed in the early Church. These Churches elected commissioners to each other, issued letters of commendation which ensured members a welcome in the Churches, and in times of material distress they freely gave to those who were hard pressed. Thus all the Churches, though definitely separate units, formed one body because one spirit united them. There was a unity of life, but not of external organisation.

#### APOSTLES, TEACHERS, AND PROPHETS

Christ first sent out the twelve Apostles, but the title of Apostle was not limited to this small circle. Paul deemed himself an Apostle, and recognised Barnabas as a fellow Apostle. Andronicus and Junia (Romans xvi. 7) were Apostles. Epaphroditus is mentioned as one of the "apostles of the churches." Paul speaks ironically of "pre-eminent apostles," and it is certain that on into the second century other men were styled Apostles than those who originally were esteemed Apostles.

A prophet appears to have been one who was ■ "preacher or teacher of the Truth." A teacher comes under the same designation. In the Church at Antioch (Acts xiii.) there were five prophets and teachers (Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul), and it is recorded that they were moved by the Holy Spirit to send out Barnabas and Saul (Paul) as missionaries. Professor Harnack, in his *Expansion of Christianity*, writes: "The prophets were authenticated by what they delivered in the form of messages for the Holy

Spirit, in so far as these addresses proved spiritually effective. But it is impossible to determine exactly how people were recognised as teachers. One clue seems visible, however, in James iii. : 'Do not be eager, my brethren, for many among you to be teachers, for you know that we teachers shall undergo severer judgment.' From this it follows that to become a teacher was a matter of personal choice, based upon the individual consciousness of possessing a charisma" (a gift of the Spirit).

As regards the title of evangelist, it occurs three times in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul tells the Ephesians (iv. 11) that Christ "appointed some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some pastors or teachers." Luke, who is described by early Christian writers as "an Apostle and evangelist," says (Acts xxi. 7) that he and Paul "came to the house of Philip the Evangelist," and adds that Philip had four daughters who were prophetesses. (In old English the Greek equivalent to the word "prophet" was translated "preacher.") Paul, in his letter to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 5), exhorts him to do "the work of an evangelist."

We may fairly infer that the grouping by Paul of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers was meant to convey that either constantly or intermittently they were called of God to spread in a special manner the "Good News." They were charismatics, possessed of the gifts of the Spirit. When exercising these gifts they were in the universal ministry.

## MARKS OF AN EVANGELIST

A diligent study of the New Testament and the documents of primitive Christianity has convinced eminent and competent scholars that "Apostles, prophets, and evangelists" were outside the local church organisation, and that they held their position under distinctive conditions.

These it is well to recall are :—

1. They had special gifts of the Spirit. Professor Harnack (*The Constitution and Law of the Church*) writes: "They are charismatics, *i.e.* their calling rests on the gift of the Spirit, which is a permanent possession for them, and this applies ideally to the Church. But their charismatic character does not prevent their mandate from being recognised or in certain cases being put to the test by the Church. If the commission expires he is then only a teacher."

2. They belonged to the Church as a whole, and were not elected to a position in a particular community. To quote Professor Harnack again: "In the earliest Christian Churches those who spoke the word of God occupied the highest positions, and they were divided into apostles, prophets, and teachers. These were not esteemed as officials of an individual community, but were honoured as preachers who had been honoured by God, and assigned to the Church as a whole."

These evangelists proved a valuable bond of unity, and kept before the independent communities that they were units in a universal Church.

3. They were men who freely gave themselves and their property to the Churches. If we turn to the

*Didaché, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*,<sup>1</sup> it is made clear that the "ordinance of the gospel" (chap. 13) had to hold good concerning them. These rules are laid down: "Let every one who comes in the name of the Lord be received, but he shall not remain more than one day, or, if needs be, two. If he remain for three days he is a false prophet. When the Apostle departs let him take nothing but bread enough to last until he reach his night quarters. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet." These regulations are all on the Lord's plan—that His messengers should be received hospitably.

4. They were men who had no settled place of abode. The *Didaché* lays it down as an essential for an Apostle that, along with a forsaking of worldly pursuits, he should be marked by an indefatigable missionary activity. There must be no settling down. The Apostle's business was "the ministry of the Word" (Acts vi. 4).

5. They were those who had a commission. Christ gave the commission to the Twelve and then to the Seventy. Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Church at Antioch. Then there were the "Apostles of the Churches." The practice eventually became prevalent of giving credentials to prophets and evangelists.

<sup>1</sup> In 1873 the Greek Bishop of Serres found in Constantinople a manuscript entitled, *Didaché*, or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. It was a document known by repute, but had been lost for centuries. It was published in 1883. It gives a most useful glimpse of Christian institutions before Episcopacy muddled the stream of apostolic simplicity in the post-apostolic age.

Priestly pretensions were not known by the Christians who observed the teaching which the little treatise preserves, and which was the guide of the early Christian Churches.

This practice has continued up to the present. To-day, if a member of the Society of Friends feels moved to visit the Churches he is sent with a letter of greeting. Wesley, following apostolic practice, sent out itinerant preachers, some of whom laboured at their crafts in the intervals of their ministry. Other illustrations will occur to the reader.

### IMITATORS OF THE FIRST EVANGELISTS

There were many "imitators" of the Apostles, and what we know of them and their work abundantly testifies that the foregoing marks of an evangelist were eagerly borne. Moved by the Spirit, they laboured among all the Churches; freely gave themselves and their means to the work; they were self-consecrated. Wandering from place to place, they were obedient to the "ordinance of the Gospel"—having freely received, freely give. Eusebius writes:

"Very many of the disciples of that age (pupils of the Apostles) whose hearts had been reached by the divine Word . . . first fulfilled the command of the Saviour and divided their goods among the needy. Then they set out as Evangelists, eagerly striving to preach Christ to those who as yet had never heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the holy Gospels. In foreign lands they simply laid the foundation of faith. That done they appointed others as shepherds, entrusting them with the care of the new growth, while they themselves proceeded, with the divine grace and co-operation, to other countries and to other peoples."

The same writer also found that at the end of the second century of the Christian era "There were even yet many Evangelists of the Word seeking earnestly to use their divinely inspired zeal, after the example

of the Apostles, to increase and build up the divine Word."

All along the centuries there have been imitators of the Apostles. Had not Wycliff his "Poor Preachers," who ventured their lives and liberty to carry his translated Testament to their countrymen? Did not Francis of Assisi and his followers take the vow of poverty? Are there not now many consecrating their lives and means at home and in foreign lands to missionary work "after the example of the Apostles"? Carey, founder of Indian missions, was in his time a notable example.

#### TEACHING OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

It is now appropriate to turn to the teaching and examples which were fertile in evoking this self-sacrificing evangelical zeal.

Our earliest evidences of the evangelical methods are in the letters of Peter and Paul. They were the chiefs of the Apostles in missionary activity. Yet they were not always on the wing. Here and there they both planted and watered. When not on missionary journeys they maintained themselves. Paul, when he went to Corinth (Acts xviii. 3), "worked at his trade."

In his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix.) the Apostle Paul, however, maintains his right to maintenance, not because he was a bishop or elder, but owing to his position as an Apostle. He asks, "Am I not an Apostle?" (these are the keywords of the chapter, and his argument does not apply to the local ministers) and with perfect justice he claims that, if he were not one of the first twelve Apostles, he was an Apostle to

them, or there would have been no Church at Corinth. With abundant illustration he supports his right, and adduces the authority of the Master: "Even so did the Lord ordain [appoint] that they which proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel." That Paul had only an Apostle (a missionary) in mind is seen by a reference to the occasion on which these words were uttered by Christ. When Christ sent out the twelve Apostles, He said to them :

"Freely ye received, freely give. Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff, for the labourer is worthy of his food." Matt. x. 8, 9, 10 (Revised Version).

"You have received without payment, give without payment. Provide no gold, or even silver or copper to carry in your pockets, no hand-bag, nor change of linen, nor shoes, nor walking-stick, for the labourer deserves his food" (Weymouth's version).

Those who went forth as heralds to proclaim the Gospel had only a right to expect hospitality, a practice exalted into a virtue in primitive Christianity.

When the Seventy were afterwards sent out by Christ the same instructions were given, with the addition :

"And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give : for the labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke x. 7 (Revised Version).

"And in the same house stay, eating and drinking at their table; for the labourer deserves his wages" (Weymouth's Version).

It appears indisputable, with these words before one, that the "hire" was simply a right to be a guest—a receiver of hospitality. Yet such hire Paul re-

fused and claimed liberty to dispense with. As a missionary, he was entitled to maintenance, but announces in verse 18 his decision to refuse it. For a literal translation of this verse 18 some read, "What are my wages, then? *Verily, my wages consist in the refusal of wages*, that I may make the Gospel costless." His motive was: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself slave unto all, that I might gain the more." A. Mounfield comments upon the sentence as follows: "Paul freed himself from every man, not that he might be a free man, but that he might enter upon a new bondage. Such is the meaning of his words. He would at any cost have freedom, in order that his servitude might be more real. Under obligation to no man, he would yet become every man's slave. Paul's position is most plainly defined. He saw clearly that his influence would be limited to the extent that he received support from any. His ideal of ministry was to be free from men, not that he might be *less* to men, but that he might be *more*."

It is altogether beside the mark to quote, in support of a paid ministry, a man who in the very next sentence declared himself ready rather to die than make his ministry anything but free.

#### WARNING AGAINST "CHRIST TRAFFICKERS"

Those who support a resident ministry, cannot, therefore, claim the Apostle Paul in support of the expediency of their practice. His teaching as to maintenance only relates to the missionary, and his practice when a resident minister (to use the modern title) was to follow his occupation as a tent-maker. His precept was like his practice. He strongly in-



culcated the duty of earning a livelihood whilst doing Christian work. "If any will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10) was his injunction. This was also strongly insisted upon in the primitive Church long after the Apostle had passed away. In the *Didaché* (chap. xiii.) it is set forth :

"If a believer comes as a wayfarer, assist him as much as you are able, but he shall only stay with you two or three days, if need be. If, being a craftsman, he wishes to settle with you, let him earn his living by his work; but if he has no craft provide according to your good sense, so that no Christian may live with you in idleness. If he is unwilling so to do he is a Christ trafficker; beware of such."

#### WORTHY OF HIS HIRE

From the foregoing we are justified in inferring that the phrases "being worthy of his meat," or "the labourer is worthy of his hire," only apply to those who have the character of Evangelists. There is no support from the teaching and practice of the first century for relating them to a local ministry. The early Church interpreted the "hire" to be lodging, food and help on the missionary journey. This support was accorded willingly, but the Churches demanded that those who received it should give evidence that they had a divine call which entitled them to what "the Lord ordained." The Apostle John confidently relied on the Churches being able to discern who had the call and who had not, for he wrote: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John iv. 1).

## OUR VIEW OF EVANGELISTS

Whom we as Churches regard as Evangelists and our relation to them, may now conveniently be briefly stated, and categorically for greater simplicity. Bearing in mind the foregoing, we can see that all the principles involved in the recognition given to Evangelists in the primitive Churches are recognised by us.

1. We require that the Evangelist should feel that he is called by God to a special work, and that the Churches test that call by the evidence shown by fruits in his visits to the Churches (Acts i. 8, also Acts xiii, 2-4).

2. That the Evangelist belongs to all the Churches. He is of them but not in them. The Evangelist is not a member of the Church he visits. He is received and honoured for his work, but, like the early Apostles, if he founds a Church, he appoints elders temporarily or arranges for the company of believers to do so. He is outside the organisation of the Church. Like the Apostle Paul, he recognises the authority of the Church, but gives advice and also directs when needful.

3. When the Evangelist ceases his special work he returns to his own Church and takes up the ordinary duties to which he is appointed by his fellow members. He then ceases to have maintenance.

4. When a brother is on evangelistic work he has a right to maintenance. This takes various forms. The form is subsidiary to the principle. Provision is therefore made for some Evangelists in money and kind, but there is no temptation of worldly gain held out to an Evangelist. The Apostle claimed that an accompanying "sister" had a right to be maintained,

and the Evangelist, if he is married, must have his wife and children, if need be, provided for. But the maintenance ceases when the special call to this evangelistic service ends.

5. The Evangelist, being temporarily withdrawn from ordinary occupations for a livelihood, is to be temporarily maintained. Our practice is that instead of a Church which is visited contributing directly to the Evangelist, all the Churches jointly form a fund which is disbursed as occasion needs.

### A CONTRAST

Some outside our borders confuse the maintenance of an Evangelist with that of a minister stationed in a church or a circuit. A moment's consideration proves that the cases are not analogous. An Evangelist is not resident in one place, a stationed minister is; an Evangelist commences new causes, the resident minister serves an established one; the Evangelist visits a Church, the resident minister stays there; the Evangelist does special work, the resident minister the ordinary work. The Evangelist's work is done most efficiently when he is no longer needed; the minister is always required. An Evangelist is prevented by the roving nature of his work from pursuing the usual means of livelihood; the resident minister can so share the work with others that he can earn his livelihood. An Evangelist starts a new cause, remaining for a limited period to build it up, and leaves it self-sustaining; he holds special services to gather new converts and refreshes believers, inspiring them to continue in their work. The resident minister comes to a Church already founded, but has no duties

to perform which cannot be shared by those who should be associated with him in the ministry. The Evangelist helps a Church to sustain itself; the resident minister helps a Church to sustain him.

To this contrast may be added the observation that the Evangelist does not limit service in the ministry, he strives to increase it; but the resident minister limits service if others do not share the ministry with him. If the ministry is adequately shared the necessity for maintenance is avoided.

### A CALL FOR EVANGELISTS

Colleges can train pastors, but God designates and equips Evangelists. An Evangelist belongs to all the Churches, having a roving commission. He does not hold office in a local Church, and if successful in founding a Church leaves it to elect its own officers. Whatever authority he exercises in church affairs is of grace and not of right. Cut off for the time being from the local ministry, he has a place and privilege not given to those limited to a Church or Circuit. His vocation is the winning of souls, and his place of service is that which he creates or to which he is called by urgent need.

He or she who seeks to be an Evangelist aspires after a great privilege. Throughout all the ages God has raised up those He has fitted to give His message to the world. Under the Old Covenant Amos, the herdsman, was the forerunner of the prophets of Israel, the great revival preachers. Under the New Covenant, ever since the day of Pentecost, men and women of high and low estate have gone like a fire through the Churches and to those beyond. Wherever we recog-

nise the charismatic we ought to make it possible for those so called of God to fulfil their mission. The harvest truly is great, and the labourers are few. Those who abide in their Churches and those who go afield are needed. John Milton finely expressed this thought in the words :

Thousands at His bidding speed,  
And post over land and ocean without rest :—  
They also serve who only stand and wait.



## CHAPTER XIII

### ADVANTAGES OF AN UNPAID MINISTRY

ALL Christians agree that Christ is the spiritual Head of the Church, and raises up, endowed with needful gifts, a ministry to declare His Gospel to all nations. The Apostle Paul writes: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). The New Testament reveals that those called to the ministry were simply brethren among brethren, and the Church, as the society of believers, exercised the right of approving for the ministry those who had gifts for it. Those who entered the local ministry remained in their various occupations, earned their livelihood, and freely contributed to the Church. Members of the early Church probably never dreamed that there would arise the myth of Apostolic Succession, which has been succinctly put in Liddon's phrase: "Without apostolic authority no bishop, without a bishop no priest, without a priest no sacrament, without a sacrament no church." Liddon condemned this as a myth. In early times there was no distinction of clerical and lay, neither was there a salaried pastor,

nor an episcopal hierarchy. The qualifications for the voluntary ministry were then as they are to-day, to use the words of John Wesley, "gifts, grace, and fruits." Independent Methodists stand among the Churches to-day as those who are endeavouring to reproduce the ministerial system of apostolic times. Voluntary, to give the dictionary definition, means "free, or having power to act by choice, not being under restraint," and the adjective "voluntary" is used here in the sense of distinguishing between those in the ministry who act of free will, and those who are under the restraints which acceptance of remuneration imposes. We, as Independent Methodists, have a voluntary ministry, that is, unpaid. Such a ministry has advantages which, it will be agreed, are of great value to any Church. These advantages are conveniently arranged under the headings of: 1, Disinterestedness; 2, Liberty for the Use of Gifts; 3, Freedom from Caste; 4, Effectiveness; 5, Avoidance of a One-man Ministry; 6, Multiplication of the Ministry; 7, Economical; 8, Elevation of the Church and Community. I will only briefly deal with these enumerated advantages.

#### DISINTERESTEDNESS

First, a voluntary minister has the background of unselfish service. It is patent that he is not seeking loaves and fishes, and when a man speaks to his fellows the effect he produces greatly depends upon his aims and motives as well as upon his ability and message. A paid political organiser, for instance, has never the same point of vantage as one who speaks simply because he believes and desires to win

others to think like himself. Similarly in the religious sphere, one who is a professional minister, though ever so sincere, is under a disadvantage. Many to whom he speaks have subconscious doubts as to his sincerity. He has to ask credence for his message. The voluntary minister has a free course. His attitude is, "Because I believe I speak." A paid minister, writing to an American magazine, expressed his sense of his disability in this respect, and wrote: "Ministry? Yes, but not a calling to live by; rather a calling to live for." This was the attitude in which the Apostle desired to appear before the Corinthians when he wrote, according to Weymouth's version: "I desire not your money, but yourselves. . . . Most gladly will I spend all I have and be utterly spent for your salvation" (2 Cor. xii. 14, 15). John Wesley had some idea of this when he laid it down that his assistants (now termed circuit ministers) should copy the Apostle Paul. Among the rules Wesley made for their guidance in 1744 was the following:

"Take no money of any one. If they give you food when you are hungry, or clothes when you need them, it is good. Let there be no pretence to say, We grow rich of the Gospel."

Richard Watson, in his *Life of Wesley*, describes how Paul's evangelist agency was reproduced in the work of the first Methodist preachers. He says: "They took no purse or scrip. They cast themselves upon the providence of God and the hospitality and kindness of the Society, and were by them, like the primitive preacher, helped on after a godly sort." Unfortunately, as time went on, the practice of the "primitive preacher" was substituted by the system of a paid ministry.



Ethically, Christianity is unselfish, and the minister who, like the Apostle Paul, can say, "I received no man's silver or gold," has the advantage: he is a living proof that he seeks "not yours, but you." Such a sign of self-sacrifice is an introduction and inspiration. A voluntary minister, though not equipped after the conventional standard of a professional minister, is effective because of his background of disinterestedness.

#### LIBERTY FOR THE USE OF GIFTS

Every evangelical minister maintains the doctrine of a priesthood of believers ("a royal priesthood"—1 Pet. ii. 9), and yet many associate themselves with ministerial systems which limit the priesthood to a few.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in his *Man and the Universe*, points out the fundamental weakness of such systems. He observes :

"A priest is a vehicle of the Holy Ghost, an interpreter of divine things, and a helper towards a higher life . . . It cannot be a professional monopoly. Like genius, it evades definition, and is not likely to be coerced and transmissible by ceremonial means."

Yet a much respected leader in Wesleyan Methodism recently contended that only separated ministers should "lay on hands," as the ministry transmitted the ministry. He forgot that grace is free. God scatters His gifts among all classes—"God is no respecter of persons"—and there should be freedom for all to use the gifts bestowed. With a voluntary ministry this is possible, but a paid ministry, how-

ever useful it may be in some respects, limits the number allowed to exercise the ministry. In the chief Methodist bodies the supply of men for the professional ministry is regulated chiefly by finance. A voluntary (unpaid) ministry is free by its nature from such financial regulations. It calls men into its ranks, and tells them to remain in their own callings. Where a paid ministry is multiplied, as, for instance, in the Methodist bodies, the number of local preachers diminishes. Either the paid ministry does not encourage it or men are allowed to shirk their responsibility. Furthermore, a voluntary system does not shut out from the ministry a statesman like the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone, who was allowed to read the prayers in the Church, but had not to preach; it does not prohibit a scholar like the late Professor Drummond from preaching and bid him remain in the lecture-hall; it does not tell a policeman, who commences a mission for his fellow constables, to keep to his beat. A voluntary ministry finds an outlet for all grades of talents and experience, and, further, it calls men into an equality of status in the ministry.

#### FREEDOM FROM CASTE

Christ said: "But be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." If we comply with this teaching there will be no division of clerical and lay in the Church; the distinction is of character and not of office. Dr. Parker condemned the title of "Lay Preacher," as he was afraid it involved him being styled "Clerical Preacher." The fact is, this nomenclature has arisen to express ideas which have not Scriptural warrant, but exhibits a

tendency of the human mind which Moses condemned in his rebuke of Joshua (Num. xi. 29). Even the Apostle Paul found that distinctions were in his day being made in the ministry. Some questioned his equality with those who were in the first group of Apostles, but he asserted to the Corinthians, with an authority that could not be gainsaid, "If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you" (1 Cor. ix. 2). The Church at Corinth unquestionably came into existence through the agency of his preaching. On the same ground a voluntary minister is a minister of the Church which appoints him and which he serves. Yet there are those in both the Methodist and Episcopal professional ministry who affirm that one who serves without remuneration and continues in his trade cannot be recognised as "a proper minister."

The late Mr. James Travis, an ex-President of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, reminded the first Methodist Ecumenical Conference in 1881 :

"The lay ministry is older than what is called the regular ministry. The old patriarchal fathers were lay preachers. Noah was a ship-carpenter, and yet a preacher of righteousness. Solomon, too, offered the consecration prayer at the dedication of the Temple. We have as much apostolic authority for the employment of lay preachers as we have for any other kind of preaching. . . . The only difference I recognise is this, that, as a travelling preacher, I have to give all my time and energies to this work. The lay preacher preaches as he has time and opportunity, in addition to attending to his secular work. We are both lay preachers of the Gospel."

The late Mr. S. D. Waddy, then a Queen's Counsel and M.P., and a Wesleyan local preacher, also told

the Conference that both circuit preachers and local preachers were lay preachers. John Wesley regarded them as such, and it was recorded on Wesley's memorial tablet in Wesley's Chapel, London, that "as a patron and friend of lay preachers, he extended the plan of itinerant preaching." Waxing warmer, Mr. Waddy said :

"Some of you try to establish a distinction between us. You have too much of the uniform and the livery—I must be plain—of the Church. By imitating clergymen, wearing collars, and M.B. waistcoats, you neither make yourselves more respectable nor more respected. I venture to say that what we want now is not that more difference should be made between the two. Let there be fair play, equal work, equal rank, equal call in the sight of the Almighty."

It is significant that the words on the memorial tablet have been substituted by others. Yet, how foolish these distinctions are! The Roman clergy will not acknowledge the "orders" of the Episcopal clergy, the Episcopal clergy in turn will not acknowledge the "orders" of the Wesleyan circuit minister, who in turn will not agree that the local preacher is in the "regular ministry." Stress is laid on ordination, although the Scriptural meaning of ordination is simply a form of setting apart, and can be applied as appropriately to the appointment of a school superintendent as of a circuit superintendent. It is only right to point out that some of the most eminent Nonconformist ministers, following the example of the late Dr. Dale, now see the absurdity as well as the bad logic of this caste spirit, and will not be styled "Reverend," which is supposed by some to be a corollary of distinction. It is forgotten that the title

was first used in the sixteenth century with respect to lawyers, who have discarded it, and that the Wesleyan Conference once forbade it. In recent years it has been decided by the High Court of Justice that it is a title any one can assume. It is simply a courtesy title. If such distinctions were only now beginning to be introduced they would be repudiated, but they come to us with a hoary crown of antiquity. In Christianity there is no caste to be found; indeed, it is strongly repudiated by the Gospels. The mere fact that a man earns his bread either as a mechanic or college professor should not put him in a subordinate position in the ministry. History shows that a priestly caste, however innocent the original intention, has in its nature a striving for power, and in the end becomes exclusive or autocratic, if not infallible like the Pope.

The title "Reverend" is an outward sign of caste. In the Independent Methodist ministry we have no such distinction. The title "local preacher" has no meaning for Independent Methodists, because we know only one kind of minister in a Church. In this we are unique among Methodists. It is true we have church and circuit ministers, but they are one and the same, and, therefore, no line is drawn between them. We agree with an Irvingite pastor who said :

"Among us the ministers of the Church belong to every social rank. Some of them are peers and some are cobblers. We do not think that their social rank should be affected by their ecclesiastical office. We cannot ask society to confer a title of courtesy ('Rev.') on a man because the Church has invested him with spiritual functions any more than we can ask the State to confer a title of nobility upon him for the same reason. We take our position in the Church, not according to our social rank, but according to our ecclesiastical office. Outside the Church our ecclesias-

## 118 ADVANTAGES OF AN UNPAID MINISTRY

tical office confers no claim to social position. The cobbler is a cobbler to the world, and the peer is a peer to the world, whatever he may be to us."

A ministry without caste presents itself to the world in the armour of ability and character, which no caste distinctions can confer. A voluntary ministry is a witness against caste.

### EFFECTIVENESS

A voluntary ministry can claim at least four effective qualifications: 1, in its ranks are representatives of all classes; 2, it lives in close touch with the people; 3, it possesses a knowledge of common speech; and, 4, it has freedom of action.

1. According as a Church is wealthy it attracts to its paid ministry those who assimilate to the caste distinctions which wealth unfortunately creates. A clergyman has been described as "a gentleman in a parish"—one who has been secured in social status and educated for a profession, which entitles him to be received in society. Nonconformist Churches, in the degree that they insist upon a collegiate training for their ministry, draw from different social strata those willing to fit themselves to denominational requirements, which are somewhat regulated by the stipends offered. A voluntary ministry provides its own training and places no burden on the Churches, and, therefore, no class is excluded, the peer and the ploughman are alike welcomed. The ministry is composed of women as well as men. As ministers they create and sustain Churches, and are not dependent upon the Churches for either status or livelihood. As they believe they preach, and as they have ability

and make sacrifices God uses them to find their place in the hearts of the people. A voluntary ministry secures that "to the poor the Gospel is preached."

2. The voluntary minister lives in close touch with the people. He has a first-hand knowledge of life's problems, the worries and perplexities of daily routine, business affairs, and monotonous toil; of the temptations of riches and the depression of the struggle against poverty. This is in direct contrast to the professional minister, who lives a protected, if not a secluded, life, and who finds an artificial exterior is presented to him in Church and ordinary life. In the presence of ecclesiastical garb even speech in a railway carriage is often restrained. A ministerial salary and position, while relieving a man from pecuniary cares, also cuts him off from one of the daily experiences of his hearers, and involuntarily, if the paid minister ventures to discourse on economic problems, they murmur, "Let the cobbler keep to his last." Some now in the paid ministry admit their disability in this direction, and as a remedy it has been urged that one preparation for the professional ministry should be a business training. It is lamented, too, that "where there is a specialised profession with very specialised duties a certain professionalism of attitude and view is sure to arise." Bishop Fraser was aware of this, and in a letter to the late Mr. George Harwood, M.A. (M.P. for Bolton, and an able preacher), wrote :

"I really should be sorry for you to take orders, because I feel you could do much more good as a layman. A clergyman is supposed to be bound to speak and act in a particular way, and the freedom of a layman gives a two-fold value to whatever he does for Christ."

The good bishop was right. He saw that voluntary ministers are perforce in the current of life's stream, and have to breast it as well as those to whom they preach.

3. It is foolishness to hold culture and scholarship in low esteem, but they are of little avail unless tested in the crucible of humanity's common experiences. The voluntary minister passes this test, that, being educated in the common school of life, he knows the life and language of his fellow scholars. A factory worker, a forgerman, a carter, a solicitor, a journalist, a merchant, or a manufacturer are in the rough and tumble of life, and know how to approach their fellows. Therefore, if worthy to be called into the ministry, they are effective in this: they are understood of the people. When the Master spoke the "common people heard Him gladly" (Mark xii. 37). Like Him, they go to the people with the common speech. This is a great advantage. A well-known writer says: "It must be remembered that English is not a democratic language. It is formed by the mixture of two utterly unlike elements, one aristocratic, the other plebeian. . . . Inequality is stamped indelibly into our language as in no other great language." Dr. Morgan Gibbon, in an address given a few years ago, showed how sensible he is that there is a danger of disability arising from a specialised literary training, for he expressed the opinion that "ministers were listened to by those who did not understand them; the ministers had not the people's language." A sarcastic critic has the credit of the epigram: "a minister is invisible on week-days and incomprehensible on Sundays." This could not be said of the late Charles H. Spurgeon, a prince among preachers, for he stood



among the foremost as a master of his mother tongue. The voluntary minister is likely to have in a measure the same qualification as Spurgeon, for in his daily life he has to use language which conveys his meaning without explanation. He has, therefore, as part of his equipment, a knowledge of common speech.

4. A voluntary minister has freedom of thought and action. We offer again a particular illustration. The late member for Bolton (Mr. George Harwood) often preached in Nonconformist chapels, and the Bishop of London offered him a licence to preach in Established Church pulpits. Mr. Harwood asked if the licence would prevent him preaching for Nonconformists, as he often did, and, the reply being in the affirmative, he declined the offer, telling the bishop that he preferred "liberty to licence." The truth is, the paid minister is immeshed by the system of which he is a part. A clergyman is under his bishop, a Methodist minister under his superintendent, and in practice the superintendent minister is aware of the existence of circuit stewards. It is feared by some Congregational pastors that the new office of Moderators will interfere with liberty, and it is on record that Baptist and Congregational pastors do not always find deacons docile and dumb. Liberty is sweet, and the voluntary minister is never afraid of his salary not being forthcoming. Moreover, being free from dependence on remuneration by the Church, the restraints on his actions come from within and not without, and he has freedom in association with other Churches and a liberty in the disposal of his influence and labours not enjoyed by his stipend-bound brother,

## AVOIDANCE OF A ONE-MAN MINISTRY

The one-man ministry, it is true, has certain advantages, but they are counter-balanced by serious disabilities. A review of the conditions caused by the one-man ministry demonstrates this. Look at some points. A varied congregation needs a varied ministry. There are few Admirable Crichtons in the world, and no one man has yet been found possessing all the virtues which are theoretically supposed to be embodied in a one-man ministry. Indeed, the average duration of the Congregational pastorate of Churches, supposed to be for life, is less than seven years. It was recently authoritatively asserted that nearly one half of the Congregational ministry were ready to change pastorates. What must be the experience of a minister who feels the Church is tired of him or he is tired of it? But supposing the minister of a Church is a genius, what happens? If he is successful in persuading men to dedicate their leisure to preaching and ministerial work they are barred from the pulpit in their own Church. There are some congregations which could hardly survive the shock of a mechanic or collier occupying the pulpit, unless he happened to be a Labour M.P. they were patronising. The ablest men in the congregation are, therefore, led to devote their gifts for public speaking to other uses than in the pulpit, and their brethren in the Church lose the benefit of having truth presented to them from different aspects of experience. A one-man ministry has also ill effects upon the man himself. He becomes self-centred and falls into association with those like unto himself who adopt titles and uniforms to differentiate them from other God-called men. Custom makes a law of in-

equality. By virtue of their position those in the one-man ministry are asked to officiate at the Lord's Supper, marriages, baptisms and funerals, and custom associates these duties exclusively with them. No doubt the spirit of sacerdotalism is repudiated, yet the fact remains that the voluntary minister is by custom prevented from touching the life of the people in these services, and is put into a different category from the professional ministry. Thus the one-man system is a peril spiritually to the man who serves under it, as it leads him to be regarded not as other men, and the system is a perpetual deterrent to the voluntary minister reaching the same point of influence as the stationed pastor, or as the Methodist circuit minister who has reserved to him these ceremonial services by legislation of Conference. Apart from the effects of the system on the preaching of the Word, the members of the Church suffer, as they either become parasitical or commit their Christian work to a proxy.

Canon Ryder, of the Irish Episcopal Church, in his book on *The Priesthood of the Laity*, writes :

“ There is an ingrained tendency in human nature for men to allow others to perform their devotions for them. Such neglect has led to the lowering of the spiritual life of the main body, and to the loss of the 'primitive ideal. There has been a cleavage between those called the ministers and the main portion which possesses no lower status, no lesser dignity, than to be members of Christ's body on earth.”

Further, the one-man ministry is a barrier to the exercise of gifts in the Church, and also outside of it, for the minister becomes the representative of the Church at Conferences, on Church Councils and public bodies, thus limiting the thoughts and activities of

church members. Instead of the responsibility of church membership, especially that of original work (planning and organising), being borne generally, they become to a great extent centred in the minister, who speaks of the Church as "my Church" and the members as "my people."

Now make a contrast. The voluntary minister has no need to entrench his position, and he feels it is his work to train all to fulfil the responsibilities of church membership. Under such teaching and leadership a body of self-reliant men and women grow in the Church. It becomes a self-sustained society, rejoicing in its ministers, but not dependent upon them, except in their vocation. Church work fits those who undertake it for usefulness also in civic life, and it is a striking fact that, so far, the Labour Members of Parliament have come from the Democracy. Many of these members date their usefulness from their entrance into church service. Again, the voluntary ministry makes it possible for the poorest to have the Gospel preached to them by the ablest men, as the voluntary preacher is not chained by emoluments to the richest congregations. Poor people are entitled, like the rich, to the best. To some extent Methodism can lay claim to providing for this, as by its system of circuit ministers all the Churches get a share in the specially trained minister's services. But this system has drawbacks, for the circuit minister is restricted by the demands of the richer congregations, and by the amount of quarterage paid by the other Churches in the Circuit. A voluntary ministry is, however, free to answer the calls of all, and the Churches are thus blessed with the proclamation to them of a wider range of sacred truth than one man can supply, and

also have the benefit of varied gifts and talents in the pulpit. Under the voluntary system, based upon democratic control, the voluntary minister is assured of a unity between himself and the Church. It asks him to preach, and he accepts without any bargaining as to salary. He has no worry as to whether he will receive a "call" to another Church when his congregation wearies of him, nor does he need to look with weary eyes for the expiration of his term in an uncongenial sphere. Both Churches and ministers enjoy a free relationship. Churches can weed out, without a deprivation of livelihood, those they deem unsuitable to their needs. In a sentence, by a voluntary ministry the incubus of a one-man ministry is lifted from the Church.

#### MULTIPLICATION OF THE MINISTRY

From what has already been written the assertion that voluntaryism multiplies the ministry can be justified, but a few further observations may be profitably made under this heading. A system which possesses the advantage of multiplying its agency without pecuniary cost to the Church is worthy of regard. The advantage is self-evident. If there are no financial restraints it is obvious that the ministry is only limited by the number of those who are able to prove their calling. A Church may, under the voluntary plan, have one or twelve ministers, and be able to help those Churches who have no ministers. This voluntary system exists but is restricted in its freedom, and Methodism is the most notable example of a system which multiplies the ministry by securing voluntary help. Indeed, without a voluntary ministry

Methodism could not exist at its present strength. At the present time, taking the Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, and United Methodists, along with our denomination and the Wesleyan Reformers, there are 17,166 chapels in Great Britain, with 4,447 paid ministers, and 40,176 voluntary ministers. This means that three out of every four pulpits are filled each Sunday by voluntary preachers. If all the denominations, including the Church of England, had voluntary preachers in the same proportion what a vast army of preachers we should have! What this multiplication of voluntary ministers would mean for the extension of the Kingdom of God is seen in the growth of Methodism, for there are now over four times as many Methodists as Episcopalians the world over. A staff of paid ministers which is necessarily restricted by its cost cannot cope with the growth of population.

#### ECONOMICAL

The Lord's Treasury is never too full, and it has not yet been able to meet all the claims upon it. There is, therefore, need for the economical use of all the resources of the Church. If the drain of ministerial incomes could be reduced there would be more available for other channels of Christian usefulness, and a burden would be lifted from the shoulders of the Churches. Those who are called to office where the paid ministry exists know the constant struggle for ways and means. But call a man into the voluntary ministry and you get him and his financial support. He receives no salary; he puts into the collection-box, and does not receive anything from it. There is no simony or bargaining in his ministry. In his case

one of the highest tasks undertaken by men is stripped of any appearance of sordidness, the sense of which has caused some to leave the salaried ministry. The Apostle Peter counselled his fellow elders: "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint but willingly, according unto God, nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but make yourselves ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. v. 3). The lure of "filthy lucre" is ever a temptation, and why should not a paid minister prefer £600 a year to £300? Yet the fact is admitted that a bishop with a palace and £15,000 a year does not conjure to the mind the position of the Master who had "not where to lay His head," and who bade His Apostles to "leave all and follow Him." On this point, in his lectures on *What is Christianity?* Dr. Harnack says:

"I entertain no doubt that the time will come when the world will tolerate a life of luxury among those who are charged with the cure of souls as little as it will tolerate priestly government. Our feelings in this respect are becoming finer, and it is an advantage. It will no longer be thought fitting, in the higher sense of the word, for any one to preach resignation and contentment to the poor who is well off himself and zealously concerned for the increase of his property. . . . The Lord's injunction that the minister of the Word is to divest himself of worldly possessions will still come to be honoured in the history of His community."

In *A Free Church and a Free Ministry*, written by our late William Brimelow, there occurs this passage:

"Now I wish to present the thought I am going to express with profound reverence and solemnity. But I think, when it is pointed out, it will be manifest to all of us

that if the work of human redemption had been arranged on a financial basis, and if Jesus Christ had received ■ salary of £10,000 a year as the Redeemer of mankind, the scheme would have been a failure. If the founding of the Christian Church and the early proclamation of the Gospel had been entrusted to an ecclesiastical hierarchy consisting of twelve Archbishops and Bishops of Jerusalem at salaries of £5,000 ■ year each, and seventy priestly disciples at £500 a year each we should never have heard of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the world would have remained in pagan darkness."

There is a call for restriction of expenses at home and more funds for expansion abroad. Still the supporters of the one-man ministry worry to raise funds for stipends. If there had been a great effort to extend the number of voluntary ministers in the Baptist and Congregational Churches, and the number of paid ministers reduced, there would have been no necessity for the Sustentation Funds which have recently been subscribed to increase ministerial incomes, and incidentally fetter the liberty of the Churches who receive the augmentation allowance. The same can be said of efforts to raise the salaries of Methodist ministers. We need all the money we can get for Christ's cause, and there should be economic wisdom. Sacrifices must be made for the sustenance of Christian agencies and their extension, and if less money is required for ministerial support it is liberated for other objects. Money is urgently called for to spread the Gospel in foreign lands, more funds are required both at home and abroad for the Christian agencies of tending the sick, feeding the hungry, and ministering in countless ways to the needs of humanity. There are endless outlets for Christian generosity. It can be claimed for voluntary service that it does not divert to itself



what may well go in other channels, and so help to bear great fruit in the vast vineyards in which Christ's followers are to sow and reap.

### ELEVATION OF THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

The method of Christ is to redeem the world by saving the individual. Christ is received, and those who believe and live become "new creatures in Christ Jesus." Thus the world is to be won as the Kingdom of our Lord; wherein men and women live as those attaining to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. If we could, therefore, multiply the voluntary ministry only four-fold what a vast number of men and women (for women are not excluded from the ministry) there would be striving to elevate the standard of their own life and that of others! If a Church has six men capable of fulfilling the duties of the ministry, and putting into that work their thought and effort, that Church must be better equipped for service than if it had only one. If culture be spread, privilege and responsibility extended, those able and willing given free scope for the exercise of their powers, the tone of the Church must be higher and its usefulness greater. The life of a Church will not then depend upon the popularity or otherwise of a salaried ministry. From the Churches vast beneficent influences will flow, irrigating the counting-house, the mart, the workshop, and social agencies of the community. It is for the Church to furnish leaders in all spheres of life. The individual Church is the training-ground, and in it, above all spheres, there should be liberty for exercise of gifts. The one-man ministry is a hindrance, as it limits opportunities. In the

## 130 ADVANTAGES OF AN UNPAID MINISTRY

Church "the rich and the poor come before the Lord," and they should learn to understand each other, cultivate sympathy, apprehend the Master's rule of life, and above all prove in themselves the redemptive work of Christ. All Christians are called to prove their ministry. In the words of the Apostle : "For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office ; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith ; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry ; or he that teacheth to his teaching, or he that exhorteth to his exhorting " (Rom. xii. 4-8).

## CHAPTER XIV

### CIRCUIT ORIGINS AND CIRCUIT WORTHIES

#### MANCHESTER: THOMAS OXLEY

**H**ANOVER Street Church was the mother Church of Manchester Circuit. It was there the adherents of the Band Meeting, alluded to in the chapter on "Our Earliest Conferences," formed a Church. About 1790 John Broadhurst, a Manchester draper of good standing, was converted under the preaching of Joseph Benson, a Wesleyan itinerant minister. Previously Broadhurst was known as a High Churchman, who, along with his wife and assistants (who, according to the custom of that time, "lived in"), were constant attenders at Manchester Cathedral. After his conversion he interested himself in mission work, and provided a mission room in North Street in the city. In this room Band Meetings were held, the services being in the form of praise, prayer, and testimony, and only occasionally was there a sermon preached. But the band-room was recognised by the Wesleyan body, and in this room Jabez Bunting, later the famous imperious administrator of Wesleyan Methodism, preached his trial sermon. As those meeting in the room would not submit to be

“regularised” by the Wesleyan ministers, but chose to maintain their freedom, they were disowned in January, 1806, as a Wesleyan Methodist Society. They then took the name of Methodist Independent, and in this year (1806) associated themselves with the Churches who were the nucleus of our Connexion. Mr. Broadhurst died in 1826 and devised to the Church, which met then in Edward Street, the free use of the commodious room where its meetings were held. But this gift was disputed, and eventually Hanover Street Chapel and School were opened in 1838. This building was closed in 1906, the district having completely changed its character, and is to be removed to make room for the extension of the Co-operative Wholesale Society’s warehouse. From Hanover Street brethren went to plant preaching places in the surrounding villages, and Churches which now have splendid premises were founded at Roe Green, Stretford, and Urmston. There are now, including these three, twelve Churches and missions. They have sent many men able and willing to do Connexional work.

#### THOMAS OXLEY

In 1846 the first name on the Manchester plan was that of Thomas Oxley. He who bore that name said, “I am not there because of my ability, but because of my stability.” This was a just and modest estimate of himself. A plain, straightforward man, he made no pretensions, but had spiritual power, and if he did not rank as a popular preacher, he certainly was a useful one. Hanover Street Church, Manchester, had in it a band of men, of which Thomas Oxley was one, who were full of zeal. They delighted in proclaiming

the Gospel both indoor and outdoor. During the forty-eight years he laboured in the ministry he travelled thousands of miles, a great proportion on foot. His biographer says: "He assisted in the formation of several Churches in the Manchester Circuit by going out with the brethren, his fellow-labourers



THOMAS OXLEY

in the ministry, into neighbourhoods at the time neglected, and preaching in the open air or in cottages, or in barns, until in the goodness of God the friends have been enabled to build for themselves comfortable places of worship." On two occasions (1838-57) he was President of the Conference, but his chief work was at Hanover Street Church. He loved the Sunday

school, was leader of two Society classes up to his death, and a diligent sick visitor. Genial in his bearing, shrewd in dealing with people, and rich in religious experience, he excelled in work among the sick. He was a living illustration of what the Apostle Paul desired when he exhorted men to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

Thomas Oxley was born in Sheffield on September 29, 1794, and was the son of a working tanner, a Churchman with a violent antipathy to Methodists. At fourteen years of age young Oxley was bound apprentice to the trade of file-cutting, and, as was the custom in those days, lived in the home of his master. Up to then, like his father, he had attended the Church of England, but early transferred himself to the Methodist New Connexion Church, of which his master was a member. There was a secession from this body, in which his master joined, and an Independent Methodist Church was formed. It was this newly formed Church which gave Thomas his first field of service after his conversion, which took place when he was nineteen. He became a preacher when he was twenty-one. Two years later he came to Manchester and commenced business. Three years afterwards he married a member of the Sheffield Church. She bore him seven children, and it is recorded that "she was truly a helpmeet for him both as regards this world and the next."

Oxley was a man constant in prayer, and had many tokens of what he esteemed were special answers to prayer. One of his colleagues in the ministry was James Greenhalgh, a popular preacher in the Connexion. This brother had a serious illness, and his doctor said he could not recover, and James himself was of the

same opinion. Not so Oxley. He visited the sick chamber and told Greenhalgh that he meant to pray for his recovery. Greenhalgh was doubtful whether it was right to put God to the test, but Oxley knelt down and told the Lord: "The Church needs him, the world needs him, his family needs him, and, if consistent with Thy will, spare him for further usefulness," and so on. Soon the sufferer found himself joining in the petitions, and, as he quaintly expressed it in after-days, when preaching Bro. Oxley's funeral sermon, he felt himself better, and did not know whether the fever went out of the window or up the chimney; but his hopes revived, and next day he was downstairs, and soon out of doors and at his work again. Well might Thomas Oxley believe in prayer.

In his young manhood the temperance movement had not begun, but he was always temperate. For many years he had beer to dinner or supper, as was the ordinary custom. One day he noticed one of his children drinking from the glass that he had left undrained, and he gave up the use of intoxicants. For upwards of twenty years he was a total abstainer, believing it was the best example to set to his family and others. But to the end he enjoyed in his leisure a whiff of tobacco from a long clay pipe known as a "churchwarden."

Night and morning he gathered his family together for prayer, a custom he maintained to his death. His children had occasion to bless him, too, for his regard for their material welfare. When he was a young man he joined with another to pay 8*d.* a week for a newspaper, and he knew the disadvantage of a lack of education. He saw to it that his children fared better, and he gave them what was then considered,

for a man in his position, a liberal education. He had the joy of seeing most of his children devoting themselves to Christ's service. Edwin, one of his sons, gave himself to the Church at Hanover Street and was a worker there until his death. William, another son, was the founder of Bradford Church, where he was assisted by his three sisters—Mary, Emma, and Rebecca. For many years these sisters were generous donors to Connexional Funds as "Faith, Hope, and Charity."

On January 17, 1864, Thomas Oxley preached his last sermon. This was at one of the opening services of Ellor Street, Pendleton, Sunday School, and his text was, "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed" (Psa. xxxvii. 3). His strength failed him in the afternoon, and he had great difficulty in walking home. Having almost reached the Psalmist's allotted span, he rested from his labours on February 21, and his body was interred in Rusholme Cemetery.

On September 3 in the same year (1864) Thomas Oxley's widow also went to her reward.

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### WARRINGTON : JOHN KNOWLES

The origin of Warrington Circuit has been described in the life of Peter Phillips. It was simply that a group of Methodists, of which he became most prominent, learned that a Church had a right to order its own affairs, and if they followed apostolic example their religious service would be voluntary and missionary. From Warrington Peter Phillips and others went to declare their message. Warrington therefore



soon got associated with it Stockton Heath, Risley, Lowton, and Lymm. These in later years have been joined by the other Churches which now comprise the circuit.

Pages could be filled with references to James Mort, once a Vice-President of the Connexion, William



JOHN KNOWLES

Hudson, James Evans (for many years now a foremost figure in the circuit), William Mercer, William Bellamy, and Joseph Hesford. Sons of Mort and Evans are now in the ministry carrying on a worthy succession.

We may appropriately give a sketch of John Knowles, for many years a fellow labourer with Phillips.

## JOHN KNOWLES

Warrington Circuit has had no more faithful minister than John Knowles. He was homely and kindly John, the friend of all. Many now recall his compact, sturdy figure, dignified bearing, and beaming eye, with the twinkle of humour in it. His manner commanded respect and reverence, and, for those who knew him best, deep affection. He was born at Carrington, Cheshire, on May 10, 1818; but at ten years of age he was at Lymm, where he served apprenticeship to fustian cutting. He attended services at the Primitive Methodist Chapel, made his decision for Christ, and at seventeen years of age was a local preacher. Two years later (1837) he joined our church at Lymm and became a preacher in the Warrington Circuit. Lymm and John were associated together for fifty-two years. It is interesting to recall that Lymm Church originated in 1802. A good brother named Richard Holl in that year left the Wesleyan Society, and put himself into touch with Richard Mills, of Warrington. The result was, preaching services took place at the houses of Brethren Pickstone, Howard, and Leigh, and the Church is mentioned in the *Minutes* of 1823. Amongst the preachers who first ministered to it were Richard Harrison, Peter Reid, Richard Mills, and W. Maginnis. It was never a very strong Church, but John Knowles made it well known. He made his first appearance at our Annual Meeting in Manchester in 1839. The previous April he, at the request of the Missionary Committee, had a missionary tour in Yorkshire, first visiting Wigan and Oldham, and travelled 370 miles.

These missionary tours were in later years often

repeated, and in 1877 he was appointed Connexional Evangelist. He and Peter Phillips were intimate, and often on foot journeyed together in storm and sunshine. He was privileged, during his long ministry of fifty-four years, fifty-two of which he was one of our ministers, to preach over 6,000 times, and to travel over 60,000 miles. In his earlier days he had to walk to and fro in his visits to Stretford, Manchester, Oldham, Lancaster, Bolton, Liverpool, and adjacent places, but no sacrifice was too great. Respect for his character and judgment made him a power in his own circuit, of which he was President for many years, and which for a period he represented on the Connexional Committee. He was a smoother of difficulties, and it was through his solicitude and influence that a number of Churches, including Friars' Green and other Churches of Warrington Circuit, were induced to return to the Connexion in 1859, they having seceded a few years previously as a protest against the Testimony of Union. In 1872 he was honoured by being elected President of the Connexion, a position which he would only hold for one year. His biographer says: "His friends remember his individuality as it appeared on the platform. Here his high-minded nobility of soul, his hatred of meanness, cant, and insincerity, his love of fair play, his chivalrous defence of the oppressed, his Connexional loyalty, and his broad catholicity, found ample scope. His power to mass real incidents in life and suddenly to enliven a speech, marked by unity of thought, by dovetailing in some humorous episode, was quite unique." One story the writer will give. Bro. Knowles was preaching at Lowton Common, and collections had to be made for heating and lighting. The collection was made at the afternoon service, and at

the point when the collection should have been made at night Jeremy Collier put his head out of the vestry and said, "There will be no collection to-night; we got enough this afternoon." A statement certainly unique in a Methodist chapel. He was a convincing and persuasive preacher, and many testified that he had won them to Christ, among them being Thomas Worthington, who in his turn became a Connexional leader. Some of his practical sayings are current yet. Preaching one day, he leaned over the desk and said, "If we could understand God and His ways would there be any God?" reminding one of Voltaire's saying: "If there was no God we should have to invent one to account for the universe." It was a delight to have him at a camp-meeting, where his tall form and powerful voice eminently fitted him to lead or preach. He preached in all the Churches of the Connexion, and helped to found several Churches, particularly Golborne, Grappenhall, Leigh (where he laid a memorial stone), and Atherton. At school anniversaries he at one time had no close rival except William Sander-son. At one time, towards the close of his career, he got into financial straits; but his faith sustained him. A close intimate of his vouches for the story that one night Bro. Knowles's daughter told him they had no bread for supper or breakfast, and he replied, "The Lord will provide." Next morning there came a letter enclosing a £5 note. Bro. Knowles never knew who sent it. When in his teens he became a pledged teetotaller, his card bearing the date April 7, 1835, and he took an active part in forming the Lymm Temperance Society. When temperance was unpopular he took its side, and lived to see the changed attitude of the Churches towards it. He, however, enjoyed a

smoke with a "churchwarden." His active labours ceased on June 30 preceding his death on August 20, 1889, when he was seventy-one. On August 22 it was recorded that "devout men carried him to his burial" amidst many tokens of affection and esteem.

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## OLDHAM : JOHN NIELD AND JAMES FIRTH

Oldham was one of the five Churches represented at the Conference of 1806. The cause at Oldham had originated about a year before, and came into existence for the ever-recurring reason, the assertion of church liberty. There were, however, two peculiarities about the Oldham cause. First, the members came from the Established Church; and, secondly, it was not a clergyman, but one who believed in the exclusive claims of clergymen who was the stumbling-block. A company who worshipped at St. Peter's Church, Oldham, no doubt affected by Methodist influences, met together under the leadership of one Joseph Matley for Bible reading and Christian fellowship. At one meeting an earnest man named John Nield (no relation of the one mentioned below) ventured to take a text as the basis of an exhortation. Joseph Matley, who was noted for his piety and good works, and also his churchmanship, thought it his duty to prevent this incursion into the clergyman's special province. Several, however, supported Nield. They left Matley's class and hired a room in a house in which to hold meetings and enjoy freedom. Soon the room at this house, which was occupied by George Hardman, was too small, and a room in a disused mill in Whitehead Square was rented. There the Church,

locally described as Hardman's folk, met until the chapel in George Street was erected in 1816. Thus the foundation was laid for the new circuit, which has now five Churches and two missions. Two at least of these men who rendered special service must have their place among our worthies, for they had the



JOHN NIELD

honour to belong to the Church which hit upon the name of "Independent Methodist," a title by which the denomination is now known. Lorenzo Dow notes that he visited the Independent Methodists at Oldham in 1805.

**JOHN NIELD**

John Nield, who was born in Oldham on April 19, 1800, was President of the Connexion in 1859. His

parents, William and Betty Nield, were among the first members of the Society which formed George Street Church. John and his elder brother Mark perpetuated their memory by noble and devoted service in the Church of their adoption. John, as a lad of fifteen, gave help in the building of the chapel, the members of the Society coming together at 4.30 a.m., before setting out for their occupations, to erect the building. In after-years he was an instrument for winning the living stones in the Church. At the age of thirty-three he was appointed a minister, and laboured in the ministry until his death. For some years, however, he took up his residence in Scotland, but, returning to George Street in 1851, was one of those who left that Church to found King Street Church, where he filled the chief offices in Church and school, and was especially devoted to the choir. He had little educational advantages, but made the best of them, as the few MSS. he left show. As a preacher he was forcible and convincing, and was in great request as a temperance advocate. His snuff-box was evident on those occasions, and sometimes in the pulpit, for it was not thought unseemly then. Another pinch of snuff seemed to emphasise an advance to another division in the discourse. He also threw himself with zeal into the agitation for civil rights, which in his manhood were denied to working men. As an operative hatter he knew the feelings and aspirations of his fellow working men, and boldly advocated them. An Independent Methodist Church, with its democratic foundation, was therefore a congenial sphere for his activities.

King Street Church had the pleasure, for the first time in 1859, of entertaining the Annual Meeting, and

at that meeting Bro. Nield was elected President. He only held the office one year, as his health broke down. At that period there was an Independent Methodist Church in Montreal, and its minister (Bro. Lea) having died, King Street Church was asked by the Annual Meeting to release Bro. Nield in order that he might pay a missionary visit to the Church there. It was afterwards not found convenient for Nield to obey this call, but it is evidence that he had the confidence of the brethren. The last years of his life were clouded by ill-health and inability to engage in the work he loved. On Sunday morning, February 16, 1863, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, he passed away.

His son Zaccheus was a successor to him in the ministry, and gave devoted service to King Street Church and the Circuit until his death in 1909. The writer has seen a letter written by Bro. Nield, when resident in Scotland, to his son Zaccheus, which discloses the formative principles of his own character. He exhorts Zaccheus to diligent study, to be receptive of new ideas, to be decided in character—not the stubbornness of ignorance—and then goes on to say: “Religion is the first business of life. Do not mistake the forms of religion for the thing itself. Religion is a living, active principle in the soul, regulating our affections as moral agents or accountable beings. It is a pure flame of love to God and obedience to His commands, for our Saviour says, ‘Ye are my friends if ye do whatever I command you.’ God who made you and the world in which you live, whose you are and for whose happiness He has made such provision; God who gave His son to die for you, He has a claim upon you. Therefore, glorify Him in your body and spirit.



Let this be the first business of your life." Wise counsel faithfully followed by his son. Zaccheus, though never as prominent in the Connexion as his



JAMES FIRTH

father, was faithful to his calling as a minister, and as a citizen won the respect of his fellow townsmen.

### JAMES FIRTH

Our first Connexional Treasurer was James Firth. His father, John Firth, was a minister at George Street Church. It was, therefore, at George Street Sunday School that James Firth learned to read and write, and it is recorded of him he also acquired "a knowledge of the way and plan of salvation," which he

made plain to others as a Sunday school teacher and occasionally in the pulpit. He was one of the founders of Smith Street (then Greenacres Hill) Sunday School, and also the Church, which sprang from members gathered in cottage meetings instituted by George Street Church. These transferred their membership from George Street Church to the new cause. Firth, who was originally a weaver, was called from the factory to lay the first brick of the school in 1837. In the Jubilee Year of the Church (1885), when this building was taken down, he had the delight of laying one of the foundation-stones of the new school, which has since been enlarged, and is a model building. As a class-leader, teacher, and superintendent of the school, he laboured for over fifty years. At the time of his death he was superintendent and treasurer of the Sunday School, Vice-President and Elder of the Church, President of the Band of Hope, and Treasurer of the School Sick and Burial Society. His activities were not confined to his own Church. He earnestly took part in the formation of the Oldham Sunday School Union, and was its treasurer for fourteen years. He was also one of the promoters of the Oldham Town Mission and Ragged School Society, and was a voluntary collector of its funds up to his death. For his services to the Oldham Temperance Society, of which he was a member fifty years, he was made a Vice-President for life. Giving up his work as weaver, he entered on the business of grocer, and was successful in his venture, in which he rejoiced, as it gave him greater freedom for Christian work. He and William Sanderson were very close friends, and together with him he gave much attention to Connexional affairs. Especially did he stand by him in

the controversy over the Testimony of Union. From 1847 to 1888, a period of forty-one years, he represented Smith Street Church at the Annual Meeting, although for the last seven years he was blind. He was twice married, first in 1831 to Mary Wild, who was truly a helpmeet. She died in 1870, and his second partner was Sister Ann Rose, of Liverpool, an earnest Christian worker. After saying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and give me an easy passage, Lord," he fell asleep on Sunday, January 27, 1889, in the eighty-first year of his age. He had only one regret to express in his last sickness, and it deserves emphasis. It was this: "My chief regret is that I did not some time ago, as I fully intended, give up my business that I might devote my whole time to church and school visitation." The Sunday School he loved was remembered in his will, in which he made provision for his wife and adopted daughter, the residue of the property at their decease to go to the Sunday School. At the death of his widow one half (about £25 per annum) came to the Sunday School, perpetuating his practical and unceasing interest in the cause.

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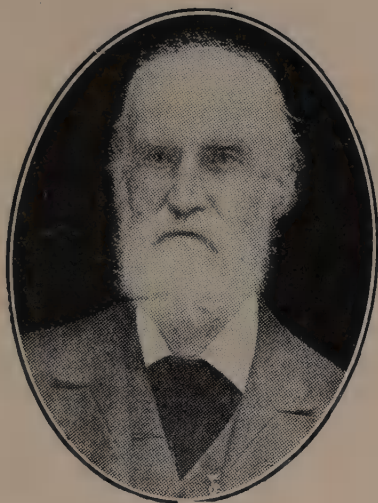
#### BOLTON: JOSHUA HUDLASS

The mother Church at Bolton came into existence in the February of 1820. One Thomas Hill, a Wesleyan Methodist Superintendent in Bridge Street Circuit, and who is described as having "a stronger hand than a wise head," came into contact with Democracy. At that period there was a quickening of political life and aspiration. Henry Hunt, Samuel Bamford, and

others fanned into flame the demand for parliamentary representation. These men and their views had many adherents in the congregation to which Thomas Hill preached, but with them he had no sympathy. There was much poverty, yet he lectured them on the support of the ministry, for non-payment of class-money, and he struck names from the class-book with little ceremony, and treated Radical opinions very contemptuously. Radicals who could afford it at that period imitated Hunt in wearing a white felt hat. Some who owned this headgear placed them on a table when attending a week-night meeting at which Mr. Hill was present, and with a contemptuous sweep of his arm he swept the hats off the table, remarking, "Who do these belong to?" The last straw breaks the camel's back, and these outraged Radicals naturally sought a more congenial atmosphere for their religious life. They loved Methodism, but they loved liberty more. Therefore, they arranged to meet in the home of John Fallows, in Morris Street, and, following the example of the early Christians, formed a Church in a house. Richard Vickers was one of this little group, and in after-years his eldest son, and later a grandson, became Connexional Secretaries. The company grew in numbers, being joined by the recently formed Methodist New Connexion Church, and to them came to preach, so a report to the Annual Meeting records, "some who are willing to be imitators of Jesus and do what they can without fee or temporal reward." Peter Phillips was one who gave help, and in 1823 was a preacher at the opening services of the chapel in Folds Road, which the little Society ventured to erect with more abundance of faith than money. It was thus the "mother Church" of Bolton Circuit

came into being, and at its centennial celebration in 1920 it recorded that there are five Churches in Bolton and five others in the circuit.

On other pages the sons of Folds Road Church



JOSHUA HUDLASS

worthily represent it, and here we give a sketch of one who laboured there for sixty years.

#### JOSHUA HUDLASS

It seemed inappropriate to those who knew Joshua Hudlass to give him the prefix of "Mr.," and it was a source to him of much amusement, whilst on a visit to his son in America, to find himself announced as the "Rev. Dr." All over the Connexion he was known as Joshua. He was genial, frank, and brotherly, viewing all sorts and conditions of men as brothers. For

sixty years he was a preacher at Folds Road Church, and for fifty-eight years was on full plan as a minister. He was born in the village of Sharples, near Bolton, in 1832, and lived to within a few days of his eightieth year. When a boy he became a scholar in Folds Road Sunday School, and continued his connection with it to the close of his life. Of studious habits, he did his utmost to get knowledge, and fitted himself to become a cotton mill manager, a position he relinquished in middle life to enter on business as a mill machine broker and valuer. He had then, what he dearly prized, fuller opportunity to devote himself to the work of the Churches. During one period he gave himself to connexional activity and became, in turn, Vice-President of the Connexion, Evangelistic Secretary, and Secretary of the Ministers' Assistance Fund. He had gifts of oratory of no mean order, and was in great request in the heyday of his powers at school anniversaries and for Band of Hope and Temperance addresses. As a minister he was faithful and diligent, and admirable as a class-leader, giving much time to pastoral visitation. For hobbies he busied himself with mechanical and scientific experiments, and at one period was an amateur hypnotist. Given much to reading, he diversified his knowledge with the study of French literature. He was also a skilled shorthand writer, using phonography for his sermon notes, which were generally on a few small cards. The writer never knew him to speak from full notes, and he could not be persuaded to write a paper on any subject. Like John Wesley, he could say, "What we have felt and seen with confidence we tell." He had no doubt as to the place and hour when Christ revealed Himself to him as a Saviour, and ever fore-

most in his thought was the great theme of salvation. Having a most retentive memory, which he had specially cultivated in his young manhood, he could quote verbally a great portion of the New Testament, and the words of the prophets also came readily to his lips. He had a natural dramatic power and vivid imagination, which enabled him to make the Scripture stories palpitate with life. It was quite natural for him, for instance, to sit down in the pulpit and give what he imagined was the soliloquy of Mary at the tomb of Lazarus; or to declaim the sayings of the Apostle Paul. He felt at liberty, when on a rostrum, to add appropriate gesture with full motion of the body to make his theme effective.

Here the writer feels constrained to reproduce what he wrote when Bro. Hudlass passed away on February 3, 1912: "He made it his first business to be a preacher of the Gospel. He loved Independent Methodism, and recalled with delight the prodigies of self-sacrifice of our forefathers. He lived to see Folds Road Church, once despised, take an honourable place among the Churches of the town. He loved that Church as his own child, and all the other Churches in the circuit shared his affections. But he shone best in the pulpit, and he was distinguished for the encouragement he gave to others to become preachers, and the unfeigned joy he had in their success. My last picture of him is this: At the end of 1911 I saw him at morning school at Folds Road, nearly eighty years of age. He had to walk two miles to the school; but he was there, and amongst the first. His love of church and school kept keen to the end—a very beautiful picture of devotion. If, like other men, he had failings, his virtues put them



in the background, and he will live in the grateful memory of those who knew him best."

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### WIGAN : JAMES TRICKETT AND JAMES PROE

Independent Methodism appeared in Wigan about the same period as Churches were established at Bolton and Westhoughton. In 1820 a letter was sent to the Annual Meeting, in which it was said : " We hereby desire to acquaint you of our having approved of and cordially embraced the most simple, Scriptural, and unexceptional plan of Independent Methodists of promoting personal piety and advance of the spiritual Kingdom of Christ." How long this company met together is not known, but the origin of Greenough Street Church, from which most of the Churches in Wigan area have sprung, can be traced. In the winter of 1826 John Fell, of Westhoughton, and Joseph Mercer, schoolmaster, Wigan, commenced services in Broom Street, Ince. Here services were continued until the close of 1827. A larger room was secured, and the little band was joined by Robert Bradshaw, of Hindley. A night school was started, and two scholars, Ralph Tinsley and James Taylor, were in course of time converted and became preachers. Another room was rented in 1829 for a Sunday School, and services were held in a tent during the summer. But again there had to be a " flitting," and a room was occupied in an adjacent old factory. This was opened in March 1830, the preachers being Samuel Baker of Stockton Heath, and Thomas Jones of Liverpool. These services were marked by a startling incident. When the congregation rose to leave in the evening



the floor gave way, and the people dropped into the cellar. Fortunately none were injured. Joseph Mercer at once opened his house for services. Public sympathy having been aroused, land, which forms the site of the present chapel in Greenough Street, was



JAMES TRICKETT

taken, and a school-chapel was opened on August 22 in the same year, the preachers being Peter Phillips, Samuel Balmer, and Thomas Jones. Writing was taught in the Sunday School, and, this being a novel departure in the district, many were attracted to it. Again the Annual Meeting received a letter from Wigan, this time stating that, since the opening of the chapel,

“ we have both felt and seen the mighty power of God on many occasions.” Thus Independent Methodism was planted in Wigan. Soon a staff of preachers was gathered, there being in 1831 Isaac Wilson, James Oakes, Thomas Williams, and John Fell. The work of the circuit is intertwined with the labours of two representative men connected with it. These two are James Trickett and James Proe, whose association with the cause extended over sixty years.

### JAMES TRICKETT

James Trickett was born on March 1, 1812, in a public-house in Wigan known as the Ship Inn. His father, like countless thousands of his generation, met an untimely death through the drink trade. His mother, therefore, had to face life's battles alone and rear her five children. James, in his early years, was sent to the cotton mill, and for most of his life he was engaged in a mill close to the present chapel in Keble Street, Ince. There for many years he was a roller coverer, and lived in a cottage situated in the factory yard. In his youth he attended the Established Church, but a bent was given to his career by his conversion when eighteen years of age. He was naturally drawn by his religious convictions to those who were establishing Greenough Street Church, and was at once appointed a class-leader, his class-book dating from 1830. He joined with a fellow workman in holding preaching services in the dinner-hour at the factory, witnessing for Christ to his fellow-men. In 1833 he was appointed a minister on full plan, and for fifty years he diligently exercised his gifts, always striving to be “ a workman that needeth not to be

ashamed." Those who still remember him as a preacher visualise a broad-shouldered man of medium height. A man of plain speech, deliberate in utterance, weighty in counsel, he secured attention, not with oratory, but with an exposition of the Gospel in speech understood of the people. His marked peculiarity was a constant effort to attain such a grip of his text that he could grip others with it. As the subject unfolded to his mind, he, with measured speech, caused others to see the truth as he did. Then he would sometimes pause and ask, "Is it not as plain as a pikestaff?" Thus he challenged thought and won conviction. His biographer remarks: "To many his sermons were like a body of divinity upon which the flock of Christ could feed, not made up of mere sentiment or trifling statements and childish anecdotes, but truths of highest import to those who listened." Whilst labouring to build up the Churches in Wigan Circuit, he attended to preaching appointments in Bolton, Manchester, and Warrington Circuits, often at great inconvenience. He was staunch to Independent Methodist principles, jealously watched against any encroachment on the principle of church authority, and detested priestcraft in any form. He loved books, and delighted to direct younger brethren in the paths of knowledge. He was no Joshua afraid of the Lord's people becoming prophets.

In his early manhood he and other preachers had to encounter much opposition in the villages. When he commenced to preach Nonconformists were not allowed to be married in their own chapels, and many thought that it was such an innovation for working men to preach that it should be resisted. Preaching once on Lamberhead Green, he was peremptorily told by the

village churchwarden that he must desist. But the churchwarden was discomfited when Bro. Trickett produced his licence (a curious document when read to-day) to preach. This licence was granted by a magistrate, and the church official walked away exclaiming, with an oath, that "all such persons should be put into gaol."

But, whilst he thus fortified himself with the law, he was fearless in the expression of his opinions. When on the village green teetotal advocates had to face opprobrium and attacks from publicans and their supporters, he joined those who, like the followers of Rechab, took no strong drink. Thus he was at his death the oldest Rechabite in Wigan, having signed the total abstinence pledge at the first temperance meeting held in the town. To quote again from his biographer: "The cause of temperance secured his earnest aid, and in the earlier years of the temperance movement, when the cause was unpopular, and persecution sometimes fierce was meted out to the promoters, he defended its principles and urged their adoption amidst showers of stones and mud."

He rejoiced in the spread of the Independent Methodist cause, and first saw Lamberhead Green Church come into being, and then Dicconson Lane Church, he laying the foundation-stone of the school of the latter in 1861. Then in 1876 he associated himself with his son Joseph and others, and commenced Keble Street Church, Ince, near to where he resided. Feeble health in his later days prevented him from taking appointments far afield, and even at Keble Street, but, desiring to preach again, he called a meeting at his own cottage. He gave out a favourite text (for he was one of that type of preacher who made a sermon

famous): "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." But strength failed him, and his son Joseph concluded the service. This was his last effort to preach, and during days of pain and weakness he waited patiently, resting on a full assurance in Christ. He died on April 4, 1882, aged seventy, having been fifty years in the ministry.



JOSEPH TRICKETT

James Trickett's son Joseph, who died in February, 1917, built on the foundation laid by his father, and, dying at seventy-seven years of age, had a record of fifty-eight years in our ministry. From the inception of Keble Street Church he was one of its ministers. One of his sons, James, is an acceptable minister amongst us, and if he is spared a few years Wigan district will have had a minister for a century bearing the honoured name of Trickett.

**JAMES PROE**

James Proe was elected President of the Connexion in 1885. The appointment was noteworthy, as in previous years a preacher had always been selected for that post. For once the Conference had a President

**JAMES PROE**

who presided over its business, but did not give an address. James Proe had won distinction in other fields of service than the pulpit. Samuel Proe, his father, was amongst the first supporters of the Independent Methodist cause in Wigan, and when James, who was born in 1825, was five years of age he became one of the first scholars in Greenough Street

School, held in a rented room. This active association with the school was continued without a break until his death at the age of seventy-five. Before he was nineteen years of age he was a teacher in the School. His mother was a woman of prayer, and she was delighted when James, after hearing the testimony of a younger brother who had been converted, also made a public confession at the penitent form of the saving power of Christ. Afterwards he held almost every office in the Church and School, and was treasurer of the first-named and superintendent of the other for many years. At critical epochs he stood between the Church and financial difficulty. A debt was owing to a bank, and many fled in face of the difficulty, but our brother told the bank to put the debt to his account. The faint-hearted were rallied, and financial prosperity again came to the Church. In 1872 the Wigan Circuit ceased to include the Bolton and contiguous Churches, these forming a new circuit, and Bro. Proe was elected treasurer to the Wigan Circuit, a position he held up to his death. In this position his business acumen, linked with his generosity, was of great help to the Churches. To all he extended a watchful regard, and evinced a strong connexional spirit. He took deep interest in a Sick Society formed at the Greenough Street School, and he earnestly urged upon the Connexion the duty of providing for aged and infirm ministers. Leading the way with an offer of £50, he became the founder of the Ministers' Assistance Fund in 1874, and was its first treasurer. In 1878 he succeeded the late George Winterburn, of Bolton, as Connexional Treasurer, a post which he held for two years. For many years he had a seat on the Connexional Committee, and he counted it a

joy to be present at the Connexional Annual Meetings, where his genial presence was much esteemed.

Whilst thus serving the Lord he was a man diligent in business. He commenced at an early age to work in a cotton factory, and in manhood he was enabled, by frugality and industry, to establish a drapery business. His business career was successful, and was marked by integrity. He had one price for all customers, and his yea was yea, and his nay nay. All acknowledged him as a man of sterling worth and of unimpeachable honesty. When the chief activities of his life were diminished he had a period of comparative rest, and suddenly the end came. Whilst taking his usual forenoon walk near his residence he leaned against a wall and died. None doubted that he had entered into the rest given to the people of God.

Whilst his chief labours for his fellows were as narrated, he did not neglect his duties as a citizen, and at one time represented the largest ward in the town on the Wigan Town Council. No name was more respected in the Churches of Wigan Circuit than his, and he was privileged to lay the foundation-stones of four chapels—Greenough Street (Wigan), Dicconson Lane, Platt Bridge, and Lamberhead Green.

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### LIVERPOOL : WILLIAM BOOTE

The origin of Liverpool Circuit is fully narrated in the sketch of William Sanderson, who had at one period able colleagues in Jasper Isterling and William Boote.

It may be added that in 1818 there were small Independent Methodist causes in Liverpool and North



Wales District. Their constant cry was for missionaries. They were visited by Connexional preachers, but no brother was permanently appointed. One of the brethren, Thomas Jones, was in 1834 President of the Connexion. But in 1839 reports ceased from these



WILLIAM BOOTE

Churches and there is evidence that they joined the Wesleyan Methodist Association. The cause Bro. Sanderson founded was totally distinct from, and probably unaware of, the Societies which had Jones as their leader.

**WILLIAM BOOTE**

William Boote was well known as one of the representatives of Liverpool, and from 1889 to 1891 was Vice-President of the Connexion, becoming President in 1892. His native place was Hathan, near Nottingham, where he was born in July 1834, but he came to Liverpool in 1854, joined Elizabeth Street Church, and in 1868 was appointed one of its ministers, a position he had maintained at his death for thirty-two years. Having an aptitude for business, he became a grocer and furniture remover, the latter on a large scale. He had command of his time, and when calls came for evangelistic service he readily responded. His visits to Churches for periods of a few days or a fortnight were productive of much good. As he prospered in worldly means he gave generously, and laid the foundation-stones of a dozen chapels. One who knew him well wrote: "He was ever ready to work for God and the salvation and peace of souls, and Jesus blessed his labours, giving him souls for his hire and seals to his ministry." He died on May 12, 1900, aged sixty-six years.

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**CLECKHEATON : JOSEPH SPENCER**

From 1840 to the end of the decade there was great unrest in Methodism, and Cleckheaton reported to the Annual Meeting in 1852, "We still greatly admire the principle upon which the Free Gospel Churches are founded. Both the Church and the world are feeling the influence of it, for within a few miles round this place scores, if not hundreds, have, during the past

year, been emancipated from the thralldom of priestly despotism, and are now tasting the sweets of Free Gospel liberty. Others there are who seem to get fond of the tyrant's yoke, but our prayer to God is that the time may soon come when every son of Adam shall be free." It was in this decade of unrest that the Churches at Batley, Thornhill Edge, Dewsbury, Cleckheaton, Bingley, and Flockton came into existence. They were originally independent companies seeking religious light and freedom. Their chief protest was against pastoral supremacy, and they were also influenced by their sympathies for the temperance movement. The Wesleyan denomination at that time was unfriendly to that movement, and debarred temperance meetings in their school-rooms. It was no unusual occurrence for the ministers to be fortified with a glass of port wine at the close of a service. Each of the Churches named had smaller groups in the hamlets adjacent attached to them, but lack of organisation and means, coupled with a falling off in enthusiasm, caused them to pass away. Only the Churches which built premises to worship in survived. The "hired house" was apostolical, but not adapted to modern times. There was a small Society in Bradford, where J. Parkinson, an enthusiastic soul, was the leader, and later still Jeremiah Halliday, the son of Nathan Halliday, who was connected with Baildon Green and Bingley Churches. Both struggled to get a good footing in this woollen centre, but were not permanently successful. They, however, moved about the villages surrounding Bradford and did useful propaganda work. At Cleckheaton a Society grew and waxed strong. It originated in 1842 in a very modest way, and with no idea of definite

organisation. A few earnest souls, dissatisfied with the Wesleyan paid ministry, met for mutual edification twice a week in a room which had been occupied by the Gospel Pilgrims, but still attended the Sunday services at the Wesleyan chapel. They were, it is recorded, "heartily sick of the absolute power of the priesthood in the Wesleyan body." Founding them-



JOSEPH SPENCER

selves on the New Testament, they eventually called themselves Christian Brethren, and came into union with us in 1845. Two years afterwards William Sanderson had the pleasure of preaching the opening service of a chapel they erected and also delivering two lectures on "Free Gospel principles." Though in union with us, Cleckheaton and other Churches in the district retained up to about twenty years ago their designation of Christian Brethren, or Gospel Pilgrims, which proved a hindrance to them, in spite of a noble band of workers. From amongst this band the writer selects a typical character.

## JOSEPH SPENCER

Joseph Spencer was born at Cleckheaton on November 26, 1817. At the age of fifteen he was converted, became a Sunday-school teacher, later a class-leader, and afterwards a local preacher, in which position, we are told, his talents shone forth with the brightest lustre. He was one of those who became "sick" of absolutism in the Wesleyan ministry, and met in a hired room with others whose sympathies drew them together. Thus he became one of the founders of Cleckheaton Church, and eventually was its president for eleven years. He also for varying periods filled the posts of superintendent of the Sunday School and the treasurer of both Church and School. He travelled thousands of miles to preach the Gospel, and was the instrument used by God for the conversion of many. Of an ardent nature, he often did violence to his strength in the work he was constrained to perform. He was never weary of the work, though at times weary in it, and he often declared that he would rather "wear out than rust out." He delighted in mission work and spreading the knowledge of our principles. When William Sanderson visited Colne (Waterside) in 1850 he was accompanied by Brethren Spencer, J. Holgate, and J. Parkinson, jun., who had journeyed with him from Bradford to Barnoldswick. After successful meetings at all these places named, they went to Burnley and encouraged a group there to form a Church. All accounts agree in describing Bro. Spencer as a forceful personality. His biographer sets out: "His sermons were thoroughly Scriptural, experimental and practical, and in the pulpit his appearance was that of a man anxious to save souls. To

preach the unsearchable riches of Christ was his aim, the motto with which he began and ended his ministry. He was a man who loved truth and hated falsehood and wrong. It was when truth was opposed, when error was advancing, and when injustice was undefended, that the vigour and energy of his mind came conspicuously to view. On occasions like these no one saw Joseph Spencer fall back. He was valiant for truth and defended it." One who knew him well writes: "High conscientiousness, we cannot but think, was the occasion of some of the sorrow and troubles of his life. He had a keen sense of right and wrong, and despised everything doubtful in principle and men." Like others before him, he was led to re-examine the New Testament, and there found the doctrines he preached and the form of Church government he adopted. The form of government which he deemed to be Scriptural was contrary to the prejudices of those about him, and though his path was not always smooth he never flinched. It was natural that he should find drink an enemy to be fought. As a member of the local Temperance Society for thirty years, many and varied were his labours for the cause. He established a business as a master tailor, and was able to afford much support to the Church by his efforts and his means. Such was his love for the Church that, shortly prior to his death, he gave £100 to remove the debt upon the chapel. On the night he was seized with what proved his last sickness he had led his class-meeting, and it was remarked that he was unusually lively and happy. He died on April 3, 1866, aged fifty-one years, thirty-three of which were spent in Christian service, and he was much lamented.

He had a successor to honour his good name as a townsman and tradesman and to continue his work in the Church, in his son, Amos Spencer, a brother who is recalled as one of gentle bearing, constant in his devotion to good work, and who served for many years as a representative of Cleckheaton Circuit on the Connexional Committee. Like his father, he was



AMOS SPENCER

a generous supporter of the Church, and devised that a certain portion of his property should, at the death of his widow, come to the Church he loved and the Connexion for which he cherished a high regard.

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**COLNE AND NELSON : JOHN POLLARD, JOHN  
LANDLESS, JAMES HOLT, AND THOMAS  
FOULDS**

It was as Free Gossellers the original Churches in Colne and Nelson Circuit were first known. Their designation was due no doubt to the influence of the late William Sanderson, who loved the title, as it was

the antithesis of what he termed the "hireling system of ministry." According to date of origin, Barnoldswick Church should come first in the circuit, but it did not join the Connexion until 1859. Four years previous (1855) the Colne and Nelson (Salem) Churches became members of the Connexion. Consequently they stand first in the circuit. What their views were is indicated by the reports they presented to the Annual Meeting, which was held in 1855 in Liverpool. The Colne (Waterside) report stated: "When we consider our distinguished privileges, particularly as regards those glorious free principles which distinguish us as a people, we can and will rejoice. We desire to make common cause with you in spreading the truth as it is in Jesus, and in removing from the Church of Christ everything like lordship over God's heritage." The report from Nelson (Salem) also expressed the same feelings. It reads: "Since we adopted the free principles our labours have been wonderfully blessed and owned of the Lord. We feel confident that our glorious free principles will spread far and wide." Those who established these two Churches had been members with the Primitive Methodists, but separated from them for the ever-recurring reason—ministerial autocracy. At Colne, a journal of the period says, the Primitive Methodist preachers were tyrannical. This action was resented, and people asserted independence. Soon the trustees wished to be relieved from financial burdens, and they offered the chapel for sale. Some thirty members of the Society, who had faith in the future, banded together and purchased it for £400. This was in March 1851, and in October of the same year William Sanderson came into touch with them.



We get an interesting glimpse of those days in Bro. Sanderson's Autobiography. He writes :

" In the month of October 1851 I visited Bradford and lectured on 'The Independency of the Church and the Hired Ministry.' I heard of a Free Gospel Church at Barnoldswick, and visited them on my way home. I found there a nice little Church, organised and sound in doctrine, and established on our principles. By request I lectured on the ministry. The chapel was crowded. At this place I heard of a few people at Colne (Waterside) who had left the Primitives. I immediately sent them word I would visit them next day, October 17. I arrived there about noon, and was informed that the enemies of a Free Gospel had circulated that I was an infidel, and warned the people not to go near me. After consulting with the brethren, we deemed it the best course to meet the accusation by preaching in the open air. I took my stand, and as the people came out of the mills for dinner I gave out the words 'As concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.' The people were amazed when I showed the sect I represented preached Christ as the only ground of a sinner's hope. After offering them ■ full, present, and free salvation, I told the people that I would lecture at the chapel in the evening at seven o'clock and show that our ministers and church government, as well as our doctrines, were in exact accord with the New Testament. Long before the time the chapel was filled. They listened with attention for two hours and a half, frequently giving proof of their approbation. At the close I invited any that felt disposed to overthrow my arguments to come forward and do so, but none came. The principles of a Free Gospel took a firm hold of the people in this part. The circulation of the false statement told terribly against the hired system. . . . In October 1852 I visited Colne again. When opening the evening service a number of persons came from Nelson singing. They were headed by Brethren Whittaker, Stowe, and Landless. They expressed a wish to join the free standard, one of them quaintly saying, 'We have come out of Egypt.' If the brethren are faithful the Free Gospel will triumph in the locality."

These brethren from Nelson had also met with the usual cause of offence, "the pastoral supremacy of the ministers." The attitude and claims of the circuit ministers were resented, and they came out of Primitive Methodism for fuller liberty. This was in the summer of 1852. Their experience taught them to prevent the recurrence of such supremacy, and for over fifty years now they have not had even a President of Salem Church. In this they have, unknown to themselves at the time, imitated the earliest Christian Churches, who had generally twelve presbyters or elders, who each presided over the service in turn. Both Colne and Nelson were missionary Churches, and before many years had gone over Colne established a Church in Burnley Road, and Nelson one at Burnley, the postal address being then Nelson, near Burnley. The circuit has now seventeen Churches and three missions, and is most loyal to the Connexion.

Barnoldswick origin also refers to the ever-recurring question of the paid ministry and its attitude to the membership. At the first Conference John Wesley had with his assistants (now termed circuit ministers) a rule was laid down for their guidance that they must avoid the charge of being concerned with money; but, as years passed, this was forgotten. Barnoldswick in the thirties was a small village. A period of depression had come and the people were poor. Their contribution to the Wesleyan circuit finances was consequently low, and the circuit officials made no secret of their view that the amount was too small. The Society at Barnoldswick expected sympathy instead of reproach, but their remonstrance was treated with contumely. Five class-leaders, therefore, resigned, and met with those who rallied round them at the

house of one George Pickup. Here a congregation was gathered, and in 1840 a place of worship was erected at a cost of £400. There the Church met as a self-contained community for over ten years. Then



JOHN POLLARD

the visit from William Sanderson, already mentioned, led them to see the advantage of uniting themselves with others who held similar views. An incident connected with the separation from the Wesleyan body will not be forgotten. One of the Wesleyan Circuit ministers

rebuked the seceders by an ingenious exegesis of the text, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts xxvii. 31). One of the seceding brethren on the following Sunday had his text from the same chapter, "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but that of the ship" (v. 22). The "old ship" and the "new ship" continued safely anchored in the village, and the memory of the historic sermons is smiled at by both Churches, who now are good neighbours and respect each other.

### JOHN POLLARD

John Pollard first saw the light in September 1820, at Fairbridge, but when he was twelve years of age his parents went to reside in Colne. It was in Colne he got what little education he received in the Sunday School. From Colne he removed to Nelson. There he found his Saviour at the Primitive Methodist Mission Room in Bradley Row. He was soon called to preach the Gospel, and in 1852 was with the brethren who felt they must have more liberty in their religious life. He shared to the full the rich experiences of God's saving grace in the early years of Salem Church, and, preaching at one of the opening services of the spacious new chapel in 1893, he quoted Simeon's declaration of satisfaction, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." He was a much-esteemed minister in the circuit, and at Salem delighted in his service as a class-leader. He was also an earnest worker in the temperance cause, a cause Salem Church has ever had at heart. Tall in stature and with a sturdy

frame, he gave one a sense of strength of mind and character. He outlived all his fellow ministers who joined in the establishment of Salem Church. It is recorded of him that he was a good and peaceful man, and to his life and character might be applied Christ's benediction, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they



JOHN LANDLESS

shall be called the children of God." He died on Sunday, September 29, 1895, aged seventy-five years, having been over fifty years in the ministry.

### JOHN LANDLESS

Salem Church, Nelson, was also fortunate in having among its founders John Landless, who was not only

an earnest Christian, but a man of affairs. He was one of the sixty members who seceded from the Primitive Methodists at Bradley Row in 1852. He drew the plan of the first chapel and superintended its erection. After the controversy in the Primitive Methodist body, those who went out for liberty felt that they were in a new atmosphere. Therefore, the new church was called Salem, signifying that they were at peace. Bro. Landless was born at Brierfield. His parents were of Scotch descent, and, true to Scotch tradition, they gave their children the best education they could afford. After leaving school John was apprenticed to a Mr. Masham at Burnley to learn the trade of an engineer. Later, as an engineer, he excelled, and he and his brother James established works at Nelson. In his childhood he attended the Church of England Sunday School at Great Marsden, but afterwards became attached to the Primitive Methodist School at Brierfield. Therefore, when he removed to Nelson, he naturally became a teacher at the Bradley Row Primitive Methodist School. In 1849 he and John Pollard commenced to preach. When Salem Church was established he was one of its first ministers, and served for a number of years as church secretary, superintendent of the Sunday School, class-leader, and teacher of senior class. Those who remember him say that he was "a man of commanding appearance, a manly form, with a clear, ringing voice. He had great power with God when engaged in prayer." For fourteen years in succession he was chairman of the Sunday School Christmas festival, and took great interest in training those who took part in the programme. He often represented the Church at the Annual Meeting, where he took a

useful part in the deliberations, and was at one time on the Connexional Committee. In 1867 his activities were directed to building up the Church at Barkerhouse Road. Afterwards for a time he resided at Colne, and was connected with Bethel Chapel at Burnley Road. Ultimately he returned to Nelson, and for the last few months of his life was a member at Salem, but he could not resume active service. He failed in health, and on Sunday, February 19, 1888, his spirit took its flight, after he had repeated the first verse of Toplady's hymn, "Rock of Ages." Previously he had said to John Aldersley, "Victory, victory, you will follow on." Thus he passed away at the age of seventy-five. His biographer adds: "Truly his end was peace. Through all the vicissitudes of his eventful life he remained true to the principle of a free and unpaid ministry."

### JAMES HOLT

James Holt, preacher of the Gospel for over fifty-two years, was a remarkable personality. His educational attainments, reckoned on the academic scale, were few, but he graduated in the school of life and won souls where those of culture failed. At nine years of age he was a mill worker, when factory hours were fourteen per day, and at seventeen his diligence and skill won him the position of cardroom overlooker. Later he carried on the business of carrier, and thus secured not only means of maintenance but more freedom to follow the consuming passion of his life. When twenty-five years of age, the year in which he was married, he came under the influence of Billy Dawson, Sammy Hick, and Squire Brooke, all cele-

brated Wesleyan local preachers, and their quaint and striking preaching fascinated him. His conversion followed, and with them for his models in a month he was preaching. "What he had felt and seen," like John Wesley, he felt compelled to witness to, and he had a crowded congregation to listen to



JAMES HOLT

him preach from the text, "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." He spoke in the vernacular which his hearers understood. His illustrations were drawn from their common experience, and giving life to all was his superabundant earnestness. He preached physically and vocally. His themes grew upon him, and when carried away, as he often was, with the feelings they excited, perspiration would roll



down his cheeks, and oftentimes he discarded his coat to obtain greater freedom of gesture. When needed, his voice thundered out like the bellowing of a bull of Bashan, and yet he could be as persuasive as a loving mother. Preaching from the heart, he was swayed by its emotions, and his hearers could not escape the thrall of his rugged eloquence. A camp-meeting was a glorious time with him. He was in the meridian of his powers when he fell under the spell of William Sanderson. Being a member of the little company who had faith enough to buy the chapel at Waterside from the Primitive Methodist trustees, he listened to Sanderson's exposition of the principles of "a free Church and a free Ministry." From that evening he espoused those principles, and never swerved. He obeyed the admonition of the Apostle Paul, and was "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." He was one who helped to commence Burnley Road Church, and afterwards became a minister there. He had the inestimable advantage of godly parents, who worshipped at the Inghamite Chapel in Barrowford, but became a scholar in the Primitive Methodist Sunday School, and afterwards a teacher. Later he was school superintendent and a class-leader, and a preacher. One who knew him well wrote: "From the very day of his conversion he seemed to have been set apart, consecrated, as an ambassador of Christ, and gave incontrovertible proof of his loyalty to the Divine Master, travelling thousands of miles to preach Christ and Him crucified." He was blessed with excellent health, and the writer recalls the "experience" he gave at an Annual Meeting, when he was over seventy years of age. He said: "I have never had toothwarche nor yedwarche, thank the

Lord." To many who had had painful experience of these afflictions he was a marvel. His end was peaceful, like the setting sun, and on Sunday noon, October 24, 1886, he passed away, having by agreement with his friends lifted his hands three times in token of victory. Colne and Nelson Circuit, which grew so



THOMAS FOULDS

wonderfully in the years he served it, has not since seen his like. At the age of seventy-seven, and in the fifty-third year of his ministry, the Master of the Vineyard called him to his reward.

**THOMAS FOULDS**

Thomas Foulds is a name inseparably associated with the history of Primet Bridge (now Burnley Road)

Church, Colne. As a lad he went to the Wesleyan Sunday School at Trawden, and acquired, as most children had to do then, the rudiments of education there. In his young manhood the village of Trawden, like scores of others, was affected by the "Fly Sheet" agitation (1849), which resulted in the secession of thousands from Wesleyan Methodism, and he joined with those in Trawden who left the "old body." His occupation took him later to Colne, and there he attached himself to Colne (Waterside) Church and became a Sunday-school teacher and school superintendent. Soon he was called to preach, but failed at his first attempt. He persevered, however, and became the first minister at Primet Bridge Church, with which he remained connected until his death at the age of seventy-eight. He was a warm-hearted, zealous man, and whilst building up the Church, laid the foundation of what is now a flourishing manufacturing concern. He delighted to entertain the brethren, and to visit the Annual Meeting, at which he had the joy of seeing his son act as Connexional Secretary for some years.

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### SOUTHPORT: RICHARD SPENCER

The founders of the Southport Church were in the apostolic line so far as their occupation was concerned. They learned to catch fish for their daily bread, and then the Master taught them how to be fishers of men. No college committee would have given them credentials, but they gathered men and women to the Cross and helped them to live Christlike

lives. Their self-sacrificing labours won them friends, and they were encouraged by William Sanderson and Thomas Oxley and others, with whom they became acquainted. The immediate cause of these converted fishermen leaving the Primitives was this—they felt the restraint put upon them by the ministers. The breaking-point came when a circuit minister appointed himself to preach the chapel anniversary sermon, and to their surprise asked for the fee of £1, which was usually given to the special preacher. The collection was little more than a sovereign, and they rebelled against the preacher, to whom they were paying a salary, taking that which was to go towards his salary. Having had their eyes opened on this eagerness for money by the paid minister, Richard Spencer and others met at William Rigby's house, Mount Street, which soon became too small for the numbers attending. They therefore held services in Dr. Goodman's rooms, called the Hospital. Then in 1862 they built the Fisherman's Chapel in Hawkshead Street. Financially they had to struggle. This chapel was built by money obtained from a society, the repayments to be £1 10s. per month. In 1874 a cause was also commenced in Barton Street, and ultimately both companies combined in the present handsome chapel and school in Sussex Road. Meanwhile the late William Lyon, an able preacher, who also seceded from the Primitives, led a few workers to commence a cause at Churchtown, where a place of worship was erected in 1869. They had a remarkable experience, and their faith was often put to the test. Their story, often told afterwards, was: "They made their own plans, farmers freely carted bricks, women and children carried them to the men who built the walls after

their day's work was over, often working by candle-light. When the walls were partly built, the supply of bricks was stopped, as there was no money to pay the brickmaker. He wanted £80, and there was nothing in hand. Behind the building which was being erected was a sandhole, and there the friends gathered to pray that the Lord would send them £80. A kind Quaker lady sent for William Lyon and gave him



RICHARD SPENCER

£70 she had collected. He determined to take it at once to the brickmaker, and on the way was stopped by a friend who asked what progress was being made and being told the position he put a £10 note in Lyon's hand. Thus was the bill paid and building operations renewed." In 1902 a new chapel took the place of the building erected by this self-denying effort.

#### RICHARD SPENCER

The oldest survivor of the original group alluded to above was Richard Spencer, the leader of the class at

William Rigby's home. It is a pity that there is no adequate biography from which to cull the many remarkable events of his career. After his conversion at twenty-one years of age he was an earnest worker at the Primitive Methodist chapel in Haweside Street. One Sunday the preacher failed to appear, and Spencer was called upon to conduct the service. He succeeded so well that there was an immediate call that he should be a local preacher, and he grew in influence, becoming the leader of an earnest band of men, and whilst away on fishing expeditions he became very useful. Detained once by the weather at Fleetwood, he was led to commence services, and a revival broke out, many souls being won. Another time he was at the Isle of Man, and a leader at the Fishermen's Bethel came to the boat and asked if they had a preacher on board. A reply was given that "Dick" could preach, and he was pressed to take the service. He consented, although he had only the fisherman's dress. He used to tell that during the sermon he forgot himself and kicked out the pulpit front, the atoms flying across the room. But this incident was overshadowed when forty persons were at the penitent form. He was pressed to take a service on the Monday night, and so long as the fishing fleet remained in the island he continued the services, with the result that there was a revival which spread throughout the island. It was a common practice of his to invite volunteers to remain in the chapel for a night of prayer, and in his later years, when he had his time more at his own disposal, he reserved one day a week for prayer. On this day he had not to be disturbed except for the most pressing business. It was in this communion with God that his power lay. What he lacked in scholarship

and refinement of speech was made up with his quaintness of expression and phraseology of the sea. Richard Spencer proved to be a remarkable personality, and could grip an outdoor crowd. When in his manhood's prime he delighted in outdoor services, often conducting services on the seashore. He brought his daily experiences on the sea vividly to describe the scenes on the Lake of Galilee. He had neither time nor money to get scholarship, but in the school of life he learned much and could fluently and forcibly enlarge upon what he knew. Nothing delighted him so much as to see souls saved, and his evangelistic visits, for he repeatedly answered the calls of the Evangelistic Committee to visit the Churches, were seasons of blessing. In a notebook, where he recorded the texts preached from at various Churches, there are references to fifty souls brought to Christ at one place, 140 at another, and so on. In Liverpool Churches he was most successful in winning souls. There is mention of Greenacres Hill, Oldham, and at many Churches he notes that he attended camp meetings at which converts were won. His last record is 1910 at Sussex Road Church, when he preached the funeral sermon of Mrs. J. Rimmer from Rev. xiv. 13. He was fifty-one years amongst us, and laboured earnestly up to his failure in strength two years before his decease on September 17, 1913. He was a man of robust faith, unbounded belief in prayer, answers to which he was ready to relate, and was eagerly listened to at the devotional meetings when he attended the Annual Meeting, as he often did, as a representative of his Church.

## SHAVINGTON : MATTHEW DARLINGTON

Independent Methodism took root in Shropshire in 1843. William Fitzgerald, the father of Samuel Fitzgerald, who was at one time editor of our magazine, came out from the Primitive Methodist body at



MATTHEW DARLINGTON

Oswestry as a protest against the treatment of some young preachers on doctrinal matters. A chapel was built, and in 1846 they were joined by William Doughty, a remarkable personality in the district. Doughty in 1822 went to mission Oswestry. For preaching in the open air he was arrested and committed to prison



for a month. When he was leaving Oswestry for prison he said that he would preach again on his release, and kept his word. But, to prevent further hindrance, he obtained from the magistrates a licence to preach. A chapel was built in 1824, and soon after this Doughty retired from the paid ministry, and began business in a house adjoining the chapel. He continued, however, an active interest in the Church, and was one of its ablest local preachers. There was a secession in 1843, with which he was a sympathiser, and he ultimately became a member of the Oswestry Independent Methodist Church, which had several mission stations. He died in 1862, and the Church disappeared from the *Minutes* in 1867. But the seed had been sown, and in 1857 a few people at Hookgate had meetings in a cottage. A revival broke out, and a school-chapel was built in 1860. As a Free Gospel Church it went on independently for some time. The attention of the Evangelistic Committee was drawn to the district by the starting of a cause at Crewe, and visits were made by Brethren Taylor and Barlow, of Manchester, and others. Crewe Mission, which commenced in 1869, was received into union in 1870, being represented by the late James Slack. In 1871 Hookgate Church was received into union, as was also Shavington and Haslington. Shavington Church had held cottage meetings, and in 1872 was able to erect a chapel. Haslington was founded by Matthew Darlington and others who differed with the Primitive Methodists on church government. There was much controversy at the time, and the group who sought liberty could not find land on which to erect a chapel. Matthew Darlington, son of the founder of the cause, then offered a plot, which formed a garden attached to

his house, and here a school-chapel was erected at a cost of £224. Subsequently came Buerton and Kids Grove. Then in 1885 a cause was commenced at Market Drayton, another secession from the Primitive Methodist Church, and there still lives and preaches H. Robbins, one of the preachers who protested against arbitrary rule.

Names remembered among these Churches are J. Shuter, Thomas Timmis, William Bound. Another preacher was very prominent: H. W. Hulme, who at the age of eighty-four was still interested in the work, and had representatives of his family engaged in it. He had much grace as a preacher, and when he was able walked great distances to preach the Gospel. He died in 1915, and it is recorded of him that "he worked for his Lord and Master sixty-seven years."

Another minister was Matthew Darlington, who died in 1885. He preached on the Sunday preceding the Monday on which he died, and his memoir gives most affecting scenes as he blessed his children and bade farewell to friends before he passed hence. He was a farmer, but found time to sow the seed of the Kingdom. His biographer says: "He lived to preach the Gospel over twenty years amongst the Primitive Methodists and thirty-two years as a Free Gospel preacher. In the time of his ministry he has walked over 15,000 miles. He has gone weeping, bearing precious seed, coming again rejoicing bringing precious sheaves with him. Many are now in heaven, and others are on their way, that have been saved for Jesus through his labours."

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## NORTHERN CONFEDERATION: WILLIAM BRANFOOT AND ROBERT HOPE

From the second decade of the last century our Connexion had its adherents in the northern counties. In 1820 there was a circuit of Churches in Newcastle-on-Tyne, one of the principal preachers being W. H. Stephenson, who was Connexional Secretary in 1821, and it is noteworthy that through him Alexander Denovan and his co-workers joined our Churches in England. These Newcastle Churches and others in Durham, however, had a precarious existence, and the only one of the group which exists to-day is that at Shildon, which joined the Confederation in 1916, after having had a direct representation at our Annual Assembly for nearly fifty years. But what we know now as the Northern Confederation had an independent origin. In 1877 there appeared in Sunderland the old disruptive influence—the struggle for ministerial supremacy. The Primitive Methodist cause there was growing and doing good work in Sunderland and district. It then occurred to the superintendent minister and his colleagues to favour a scheme, in face of some opposition, to erect a new chapel. When this was erected they endeavoured to carry out a scheme for constituting two circuits, with the new Church at the head of one. The older Churches and their representatives were overwhelmingly against the proposal, but the ministers had the ear of the Connexional Committee, who intervened. Local opinion was set aside, and the local preachers and officials discovered that they were not in a free Church. Their votes did not count against the hierarchy. Such events set

earnest minds in a ferment, and they were ready to receive ideas. Fortunately, for the cause of church freedom, there was a herald of light in the late J. F. Drinkwater. He was a man with an earnest Christian spirit and a well-stored mind. In his youth he was a member of a Congregational Church, and thus became familiar with the methods of a self-governed community. At Hyde, in his young manhood, he was converted at a Bible Christian Church there, and under this influence he became a Methodist preacher. He and the late William Branfoot often took counsel together, and through him Branfoot got the conception of a free Church, formed on apostolic lines, with a free voluntary ministry and a democratic government. Thus the ground had been prepared. Thwarted by the circuit ministers, a number of preachers and members determined to have liberty in their church life, and they found a wise leader in Branfoot. Associated with him were J. F. Drinkwater, E. Rutter, W. Wills, T. Shields, J. D. Johnson, Myers Wayman, Thomas Reed, Robert W. Collin, and W. J. Bartle. They were subsequently joined by Haswell Brown, who migrated from the Wesleyan Church. With the exception of one, all have now gone to their reward.

At an historic meeting held in Drinkwater's house in Herrington Street, Sunderland, on February 15, 1877, it was decided to hold services on the following Sunday in Albert Rooms, Coronation Street. In 1879 the building in which Bethany Church now worships was purchased, and the first buildings erected by the new Churches were James Williams Street Church and Lecture Hall. Before this was done others of the section for liberty had crossed the Rubicon, and

Cornwall Street, which was the forerunner of Robert Street Church, was established, and it was here that John W. Johnson laboured in after-years. His father (J. D. Johnson), already mentioned, was one of the first ministers at Monkwearmouth (Warwick Street). There was yet another Church established, that at James Williams Street referred to above. The first members of all these four Churches came from the Primitive Methodists. There has since been added Cairo Street Church. They had to gather congregations and purchase or erect premises in which to meet. There was opposition to overcome, and the principles of a Church dead set against a paid and exclusive ministry to expound. But wonderful success attended them, and in the neighbouring colliery districts Churches were founded by those who had had a new way opened to them of extending the Kingdom of God, the first of these being erected at Silksworth.

To bind the Churches together, the Sunderland Circuit was constituted, and then came circuits in Newcastle, Spennymoor, Darlington, and Catchgate. In 1882 a Federation of these circuits was formed, with Bro. Branfoot as the first President. The statistics of this Confederation were then : Churches, 21 ; ministers, 85 ; members, 848 ; schools, 20 ; scholars, 1,864 ; teachers, 344. In 1915 the Confederation had : Churches, 31 ; ministers, 81 ; members, 1,016 ; schools, 30 ; scholars, 4,046 ; and teachers, 665. Starting out with no property, these Churches have now acquired premises at a cost of £21,563, on which there is only a debt of £3,867. To read the romantic story of the humble people who here and there commenced a Church in a house and went on to bigger things is an inspiration.

The first problem to solve was the name to be given to these Churches, and the title of Christian Lay Churches was decided upon. They had not heard of our Connexion, but fortunately about this period our Evangelistic Committee determined to advertise a summary of our principles in the *Christian World*, and thus our existence became known to the Sunderland brethren. Brethren A. Roscoe and T. Worthington paid Sunderland Circuit a visit on October 24, 1877, with the immediate result that the Lay Churches agreed to adopt our hymn-book and magazine. Thus friendly intercourse was established. Three years later Bethany Church joined the Connexion, and in succeeding years was followed by others. Our Annual Meeting was held in Sunderland in 1883, and the ties of union were strengthened.

It was not, however, until 1895 that there was an actual union of all the Churches in the Northern Federation with our Connexion. From 1890 onwards a basis of union had been discussed, and then with unanimity in 1895 proposals submitted to the Annual Meeting were approved. The chief points were that the Confederation meet annually as aforetime at Easter and elect delegates to the Annual Meeting in proportion to the number of Churches, and that they have a representation on the Connexional Committee as a unit. The Northern Confederation has, therefore, continued its work, and has been most useful in binding the circuits and Churches together, and their representation on the Committee has welded them into an active connexional unit. Sketches of William Branfoot and Robert Hope give an idea of the type of men God has blessed the Confederation with,

## WILLIAM BRANFOOT

A new personality appeared in our Annual Meeting in 1881. William Branfoot had led his brethren to the freedom of democratic church life, and he and others were engaged in establishing Churches on a basis of self-government and unpaid ministry. The paid



WILLIAM BRANFOOT

ministry had proved a hindrance, and, remembering Christ's words, "If thy right hand offend thee cut it off," these brethren severed their bonds and marked their cleavage by taking the name of Lay Churches. They desired it to be understood that clericalism in any form found no place in their ranks. In after years they found that even the title they chose for their Churches did not fully express their meaning;



but the title served for the time being. To obtain liberty they made sacrifices. It requires faith and great sacrifice at fifty-two years of age to break away from church moorings. Bro. Branfoot's father was in the Primitive Methodist ministry, and he himself became an esteemed local preacher. Born in Primitive Methodism, it needed the stress and urgency of conviction to send him afield, with an inevitable break of old associations, and in some quarters rousing antagonism, where once was brotherly helpfulness. He might have yielded to the natural feeling of a man of mature years, increasing in worldly goods, and with many positions of public influence opening to him, to let his church life take second place. But with him the call of Christ to labour in His vineyard was paramount, and almost the last act of his life was to preside at a church meeting held at Bethany. This was on the Monday previous to his death, which occurred on Friday, November 14, 1903. Few men turned more to the Word of God for guidance; it was literally "a lamp to his feet," and he was ever ready, through the medium of prayer, to let the light come to him.

Having the advantages of education, he rose to the position of a colliery proprietor and shipowner, which brought him comparative affluence and public importance. His biographer says: "Constantly imbued with a deep sense of honestly discharging his responsibilities in whatever position he was placed, he sought by precept and example to enforce this principle upon all. He abhorred hypocrisy and indolence, and was not slow to condemn such. On the other hand, he was always ready to assist all who desired to attain to greater knowledge. His constant support of all that



tended to the betterment of his fellows resulted in his being from time to time elected to fill important positions." When he died he was President of the local Band of Hope Union, a member of the Sunderland School Board, and one of the River Wear Commissioners. He was for many years joint secretary of the Sunderland and District Sunday School Union. He gave himself heartily to the Free Church Council movement, and filled the offices of the President of the Sunderland Free Church Council and the Northumberland and Durham Council. But his chief work was among his own people. Associated with the late J. F. Drinkwater, who was a fellow preacher, he realised the ideal of a New Testament Church, and with him and others set about to establish one. He was the first President of Bethany Church, the mother Church of Independent Methodism in the North, and afterwards had the joy of being the President of the Circuit and subsequently of the Confederation of Circuits. From a grain of the seed of Truth had grown a big tree. The more he was known amongst the Lancashire and Yorkshire Churches the more he was esteemed. For twenty-one years he was a familiar figure at the Annual Meeting, and he was elected President at Nelson in 1899. Sickness in his family prevented his presiding over the next meeting held in Stretford in 1900, but the bent of his mind may be gathered from the concluding passage of his Presidential address which was read. It ran: "As to the proclamation of the Gospel, I have no message further than to say let it be full of heavenly love and full of plain dealing with the sinner. In conclusion, I hope and pray with Paul that preachers, elders, leaders, members may be inspired this year on which we are

just entering." He was not an orator, but had a pithy style, a plain man speaking to plain people, with the Bible as his arsenal. He lived to see the cause he loved firmly established, and younger men to the fore able to carry on the work. Tall of stature, energetic in action, whole-hearted in devotion, and humble in spirit, he was indeed a pillar of strength, and with dignity and usefulness filled the positions his brethren honoured him with. His widow still survives him, and has borne the entire cost of installing a new organ in Bethany Church in memory of her husband.

#### ROBERT HOPE

Robert Hope is remembered as the founder of Spennymoor Circuit, which at his death had four Churches, and since then the Churches at Browney Colliery and Dean Bank have been added. He was truly a man of the people, and knew their joys and hardships. Born of poor parents, he began to work at the pit when eight years of age. He became a skilled workman, but never rose above the rank of a subordinate position, refusing further promotion from the fear that it would interfere with the chief objects of his life. He had to work to maintain himself and wife, but the time he could call his own was devoted to the welfare of his fellows. He first saw the light of day on December 16, 1842, at a village near Kelloe. At seventeen years of age he was converted at the Primitive Methodist school he attended, and then came years of devoted service. First he became a teacher, then superintendent and class-leader, and later a local preacher. Often, in fulfilling his preaching appointments, he walked twenty miles, and yet

was at his work at one o'clock on the Monday morning. In 1866 he married a godly woman, who was his loyal helpmeet. Four years later he removed to Mount Pleasant, Spennymoor, where he speedily won the esteem of the people, was elected a member of the School Board, a position to which he was sub-



ROBERT HOPE

sequently re-elected, and contested Ferry Hill Division of the County Council as a Labour candidate. There is united testimony that he had a talent for organisation, was courteous, tactful, whole-hearted in his devotion, a noble character. When the Christian Lay Church agitation stirred him he quickly gathered a band of workers. His intense love for the poor

moved him to protest against secular inequalities affecting church life. He could not reconcile Christ's example with that of paid ministers giving most appointments to those who paid most to the circuit funds; nor could he be complacent when old people were relegated to forms without backs because they were too poor to pay seat-rents. As Bourne and Clowes had done, he sought primitive Christian methods.

Though it was a wrench, he left the Primitive Methodists and opened a room, which was styled "Bobby Hope's flat." Thus Mount Pleasant Church was established in 1881. At first there were five members, and in six months 125. Within two years two other Churches, Trimdon Grange and Spennymoor (Jubilee) were commenced. Having removed to East Howle in 1883, Hope set to work again and commenced services in a room known as the Band Room. Soon there was an earnest band of men gathered, who determined to erect a place of worship. They had little money, but had skill, muscle, and zeal, and with the help of a bricksetter and labourer they erected a building to seat 300 people, some of the men doing the carpentry work and the others carrying the bricks and mixing the mortar after their daily toil. The first quarterly meeting of the Spennymoor Circuit was held on April 21, 1883. Hope was elected the Secretary, a position he retained to his death, which took place on February 21, 1889. It was at Spennymoor in 1890 that it was suggested by the Confederation that a full union be effected between the Northern Churches and the Annual Meeting, a decision too late to give Lancashire Churches personal acquaintance with Bro. Hope. He built well. A lover of books, with a gift

for rhyming (for he published a little book, *Plain Verses for Plain People*), he incited others to self-culture. A little library was formed for preachers and teachers; he gave a number instruction weekly in methods of exhorting and preaching, and another night was given to teaching unlettered colliers the mysteries of arithmetic. He was truly guide and friend to those about him, and he was loved by many as their spiritual father. He crowded much work in his forty-seven years of life, and is typical of what can be accomplished by a humble instrumentality fired with a lofty ideal combined with unceasing industry.

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### BRISTOL : JAMES PLUCKNETT

Bristol came into being in October 1885, from the ever-recurring cause, a protest against ministerial supremacy. Bedminster Church, the head of the circuit, first reported to the Annual Meeting in 1886, and said: "We had no alternative left us in September 1885 but to withdraw from the Primitive Methodist body in consequence of the action of the Circuit Committee, headed by the minister." Amongst those who came out for the liberty of self-government was James Plucknett, the oldest surviving minister: W. Thomas, who had been superintendent of the teachers who withdrew; and T. A. P. Chivers, who proved a most energetic secretary of the Church. Bro. Chivers had heard in London of our Connexion and immediately upon the secession got into touch with our connexional authorities. He also visited Manchester, and preached at Bradford Church, making the acquaintance of the late William Oxley, who some

months later visited Bristol. The brethren were delighted to come into association with Churches working on the same lines upon which they were seeking to develop, and it was cordially agreed to adopt the title of Free Gospel Church. Our connexional hymn-book and magazine were also adopted, and, as already stated, the Church was received into union in 1886. In that year the Church became aware of an independent mission at Bell Hill (Kingswood), the leaders of which were H. Crane and H. Mogg (father of the present Circuit Secretary), and, the mission consenting to work with Bedminster Church, a circuit was formed. At the end of the first year Bedminster Church, which worshipped in the Albert Hall, West Street, reported 50 members and 250 scholars with 25 teachers. The present chapel in Victor Road was opened on October 12, 1890. Soon after the chapel was built Bro. Berriman, who, though blind, was devoted worker, opened a mission which grew into St. John's Lane Church. A mission was started in 1892 at Staple Hill, and the present Church there founded, and a mission was commenced at Ashton Gate, which, however, did not prove permanent. In 1898 a mission at Warmley, originated by Bro. Orchard, was yoked up to the circuit by Bro. Budd, who paid the mission a visit to explain our church polity. Two years before this Talywain Mission, the founder of which left the mission property to the Connexion, joined the circuit, which has now four Churches and two missions. The history of the circuit shows that great sacrifices have been made to witness for "a free church and a free ministry."

**JAMES PLUCKNETT**

James Plucknett is the patriarch of Bristol Circuit, and is universally esteemed. He was born February 2, 1839, at Queen Camel, in South Somerset, and is, therefore, eighty-one years of age, fifty-four of which have been spent in active Christian work. Being one of a

**JAMES PLUCKNETT**

large family, he was sent at seven years of age to work in the fields. He can recall early impressions for good, but they had not permanent effect. When he was a youth a railway was constructed in his native village, and he got work associated with it. At twenty-two years of age he happily married. The Primitive Methodists at that time were not welcomed in the

village, and the opposition attracted the interest of Bro. Plucknett. Standing near the house in which they met, he heard a sermon from the text, "The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools." This was good seed sown, and shortly afterwards a Primitive Methodist preacher (one Bro. Button) gave an address in the open air from the words, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The remarks made thoroughly aroused Plucknett, and later coming home through the fields from work, like Paul, he felt a light shine upon him. He experienced a sense of forgiveness and literally danced with joy on reaching home, having first told his wife. She was, happily, a partner with him in his joy. He was then twenty-four years of age, and could not read. He set about the task of learning to read the Bible, but in the meantime he could speak of saving grace, and he was placed upon the preachers' plan, though he could neither read nor write. Strong in body, he could then walk ten miles to an appointment, and the same distance back, after conducting three services. The villagers soon heard him preach in the open air, a practice he persisted in, though there was opposition from the village squire.

In 1875 he removed with his family to Bristol, and, joining up with the Primitive Methodists (South Circuit), served as a local preacher for ten years. Before he was converted he was a lover of liberty, and therefore in 1885, when the contest arose whether liberty or circuit authority should prevail, he left the circuit with the Sunday-school teachers and aided in the formation of Mount Zion Church. He became its first president, and was re-elected to the office for twenty-five years successively. He still holds the office



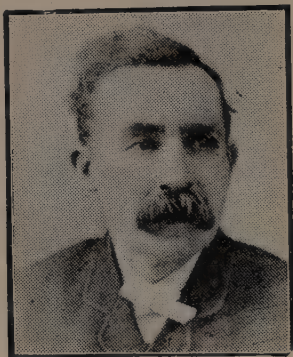
of church and school treasurer, his days of very active service being over. He has been a most acceptable preacher, and a wise counsellor, his experience being of great value to the Churches. His affection for Independent Methodist principles has grown with years, and the writer recalls him listening with the eagerness of youth to an address on our denominational position. He is living now in retirement, honoured by his neighbours and loved by his friends, and the Church to which he ministered as long as his strength permitted. He has the joy of seeing his son (B. H. Plucknett) in the ministry.

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#### BINGHAM : WILLIAM CASTLEDINE AND EDWARD CASTLEDINE

Primitive Methodism got a footing in Nottingham in 1815, and soon there were Societies formed in the villages adjacent. Other parts of the county were missioned. Many of the Societies were small and the members very poor. We can imagine this from an incident in 1838, when there was a difficulty in Belper Circuit. It was proposed that the superintendent circuit minister should have his stipend increased from 14s. to 16s. per week. Protest was made, and a church at Selston seceded. Others followed, and they became known as Selstonites. They later became absorbed by the Protestant Methodists, as they were not founded on principle; they did not object to a paid ministry, but differed as to the remuneration to be paid. About ten years before (1828) this incident Primitive Methodist Societies at Bingham and the immediate vicinity had gone further than the

Selstonities ; they had resolved to work on the voluntary system as regards the ministry, and that the Churches should be self-governed. These Societies added the word "Independent" to their title, and were known locally as Independent Primitive Methodists. As such they were visited by William Sander-son, who introduced the designation of Free Gospelers amongst them. He, however, could not attract them into the Union of Free Gospel Churches, as our deno-



THOMAS WALKER

mination was then called. These lovers of liberty were strongly averse to association with a Connexion, thinking that danger to liberty lurked that way.

They were occasionally visited by our ministers, including Robert Berry, and in 1890 Matthew Kennedy, who was then one of our Evangelists, made a tour among them. Thomas Walker, of Nottingham, at this time became interested in the Free Ministry, and founded a mission in that city. Thus it came about, after an official visit from the then President, William

Brimelow, that an application was made for union in 1892. Bingham Circuit then comprised Bingham, Owthorpe, Colston Bassett, Aslockton, Caythorpe, Lowdham, Sutton, Kneeton, and what is now Carlton Road, Nottingham, with 200 members and twenty-four ministers. There is a copy of a Preachers' Plan which shows that in 1839 there were preaching-places at Tithby, Hoveringham, Gunthorpe, Elston, Ratcliffe, Shelford, and Scarrington, but they have ceased to exist. There were in 1839 thirteen preachers, including the Henry Castledine mentioned below, George Baxter (who was over fifty years in the ministry), and G. Brewster.

One of the leading workers at Bingham for the last half-century was William Brewster, who died in 1819, aged sixty-four years. He was Secretary of the Circuit for twenty-three years. He was also School Superintendent, an acceptable preacher, and though blind he was Circuit Treasurer. He was highly respected, not only in his own church, but by his fellow-townsmen.

For fifty years these societies might be called home churches, as they met in cottages or rented rooms. Ultimately Bingham Church acquired a building which had been used as a Temperance Hall, and transformed it into a school and place of worship. Other Churches in the circuit have also now their own premises, having overcome the opposition of land-owners. These Churches have had their own peculiar field of labour chiefly among agricultural labourers in small villages and hamlets, and amid, until recent years, hostile surroundings. When at the end of last century the title of Independent Methodists was adopted by us, the Churches loyally fell in with the

designation. Some remarkable men have laboured, and are labouring, among these Churches, and two are specially deserving of notice. If these Churches cannot boast of men of learning and of wealth, they have been noted for zealous, devoted men.



WILLIAM CASTLEDINE

**WILLIAM CASTLEDINE**

Among the founders of Bingham Circuit was Henry Castledine, and his memory was kept green in Bingham Church for over fifty years by the zealous service of his sons William and Edward. William was converted at sixteen years of age in the village of Car Colston, and ever after his life was one of unceasing

labour in Christ's work. It is estimated that he preached 4,000 times and walked 16,000 miles to preach the Gospel. His fame as a preacher spread beyond his own circuit, and in at least forty village pulpits he was heard. When over sixty years of age he accepted invitations to conduct special services in the North of England and in Lancashire, and he was everywhere welcomed. One who knew him wrote: "He possessed considerable ability as a preacher; his style was original, his illustrations homely, and his manner pathetic. Added to this was a rich Christian experience, a mind stored with Scriptural doctrine, a clear understanding of the plan of salvation. Above all, being baptized with the Holy Ghost, he made all his hearers realise he had received inspiration from on high." For fifty-six years he was a staunch upholder of the New Testament views he embraced as a youth, and died at the age of seventy-four on March 18, 1892, his wife predeceasing him just sixteen days.

#### EDWARD CASTLEDINE

Edward Castledine, like his brother, was a typical village preacher. He was born in a Nottinghamshire village and remained in the locality to his death in 1895, at nearly seventy years of age. For fifty years he preached the Gospel, first among the Primitive Methodists and then as a minister in Bingham Circuit, being in sympathy with the Churches there and their views of the ministry and church government. He knew what it was to toil as an agricultural labourer on small wages, and had the further disability for forty years of having only one arm. Neither he nor his brother ever got above 12s. per week. Neverthe-

less, he brought up his family respectably, and left enough to keep his widow in comfort. He found time, too, and strength to give himself to the work of a circuit minister, and it is estimated he conducted 2,000 services and walked 15,000 miles to do so. He was a faithful, enthusiastic man, and made a great impression at the Annual Meeting in 1893, when he visited it as a delegate from Bingham for the first time.

## CHAPTER XV

### PRESIDENTS OF CONFERENCE

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Conference.</i>	<i>Presidents.</i>	<i>Residence.</i>
1805	Manchester		
1806	Manchester		
1807	Macclesfield		
1808	Macclesfield	Richard Harrison	(1) Warrington
1809	Manchester		
1810	Warrington	John Berisford	(1) Macclesfield
1811	Macclesfield	J. Crawshaw	(1) Manchester
1812	Manchester		
1813	Warrington	Peter Ashley	(1) Stockport
1814	Oldham	„	(2) „
1815	Sheffield	„	(3) „
1816	Blackburn	Peter Phillips	(1) Warrington
1817	Stockport	Benjamin Duffin	(1) Sheffield
1818	Warrington	Richard Mills	(1) Warrington
1819	Manchester	Peter Ashley	(4) Stockport
1820	Sheffield	Peter Phillips	(2) Warrington
1821	Oldham	Benjamin Duffin	(2) Sheffield
1822	Warrington	Peter Phillips	(3) Warrington
1823	Manchester	Peter Ashley	(5) Ashton- under-Lyne
1824	Bolton	Peter Phillips	(4) Warrington
1825	Sheffield	„	(5) „
1826	Oldham	„	(6) „
1827	Warrington	W. Morton	(1) Sheffield
1828	Manchester	Peter Thornley	(1) Bolton
1829	Bolton	Benjamin Duffin	(3) Sheffield
1830	Oldham	G. Swindells	(1) Stockport
1831	„	J. Lees	(1) Oldham

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Conference.</i>	<i>Presidents.</i>	<i>Residence.</i>
1832	Warrington	Peter Phillips	(7) Warrington
1833	Manchester	Alex. Denovan	(1) Glasgow
1834	Bolton	T. Jones	(1) Liverpool
1835	Wigan	"	(2) "
1836	Oldham	Humphrey Harper	(1) Salford
1837	Warrington	"	(2) "
1838	Bradford	Thos. Oxley	(1) Manchester
1839	Manchester	Alex. Denovan	(2) Glasgow
1840	Bolton	S. Johnson	(1) Manchester
1841	Wigan	Peter Phillips	(8) Warrington
1842	Oldham	"	(9) "
1843	Warrington	Alex. Denovan	(3) Glasgow
1844	Stockport	J. Armitt	(1) Manchester
1845	Liverpool	Alex. Denovan	(4) Glasgow
1846	Manchester	"	(5) "
1847	Bolton	"	(6) "
1848	Oldham	"	(7) "
1849	Lancaster	Wm. Sanderson	(1) Liverpool
1850	Liverpool	Alex. Denovan	(8) Glasgow
1851	Glasgow	"	(9) "
1852	Warrington	"	(10) "
1853	Manchester	"	(11) "
1854	Bolton	"	(12) "
1855	Liverpool	"	(13) "
1856	Nelson	"	(14) "
1857	Lancaster	Thos. Oxley	(2) Manchester
1858	Wigan	Wm. Sanderson	(2) Liverpool
1859	Oldham	John Nield	(1) Oldham
1860	Manchester	Alex. Denovan	(15) Glasgow
1861	Liverpool	"	(16) "
1862	Nelson	"	(17) "
1863	Bolton	"	(18) "
1864	Warrington	"	(19) "
1865	Liverpool	"	(20) "
1866	Roe Green and Sindsley	Edward Twiss	(1) Warrington
1867	Oldham	Alex. Denovan	(21) Glasgow
1868	Nelson	"	(22) "
1869	Glasgow	"	(23) "
1870	Lancaster	"	(24) "



<i>Year.</i>	<i>Conference.</i>	<i>Presidents.</i>		<i>Residence.</i>
1871	Bolton	W. Sanderson	(3)	Liverpool
1872	Liverpool	John Knowles	(1)	Lymm
1873	Warrington	Alex. Denovan	(25)	Glasgow
1874	Colne (Bethel)	"	(26)	"
1875	Cleckheaton	"	(27)	"
1876	Oldham (Smith Street)	"	(28)	"
1877	Bolton (Noble Street)	"	(29)	"
1878	Glasgow	"	(30)	"
1879	Ashton-under- Lyne	Wm. Oxley	(1)	Manchester
1880	Sindsley	Wm. Sanderson	(4)	Liverpool
1881	Warrington	Wm. Oxley	(2)	Manchester
1882	Nelson (Salem)	Matthew Kennedy	(1)	Wigan
1883	Sunderland	"	(2)	"
1884	Liverpool	Wm. Brimelow	(1)	Bolton
1885	Pendleton	Alfred Roscoe	(1)	"
1886	Oldham	Jas. Proe	(1)	Wigan
1887	Colne	W. Crumblehulme	(1)	Bolton
1888	Bolton (Noble Street)	"	(2)	"
1889	Stretford	T. Worthington	(1)	Wigan
1890	Nelson (Barker- house Road)	T. Worthington	(2)	"
1891	Pendleton	"	(3)	"
1892	Wigan	Wm. Boote	(1)	Liverpool
1893	Bolton (Folds Road)	Benj. Dyson	(1)	Oldham
1894	Barnoldswick	Wm. Brimelow	(2)	Bolton
1895	Oldham	"	(3)	"
1896	Bingley	"	(4)	"
1897	Warrington	Richard Lee	(1)	Wigan
1898	Moorside	"	(2)	"
1899	Nelson (Salem)	Wm. Branfoot	(1)	Sunderland
1900	Stretford	J. Crumblehulme	(1)	Bolton
1901	Leigh	"	(2)	"
1902	Colne (Bethel)	Arthur Watson	(1)	Nelson
1903	Sunderland	George Hunter	(1)	Leigh
1904	Liverpool	"	(2)	"

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Conference.</i>	<i>Presidents.</i>	<i>Residence.</i>
1905	Oldham	R. W. Collin	(1) Sunderland
1906	Roe Green	"	(2) "
1907	Bristol	W. H. Riding	(1) Colne
1908	Lancaster	"	(2) "
1909	Burnley	E. Barker	(1) "
1910	Manchester	"	(2) "
1911	Barnoldswick	W. Price	(1) Wigan
1912	Horwich	"	(2) "
1913	Wigan	J. W. Johnson	(1) Sunderland
1914	Colne (Waterside)	"	(2) "
1915	Oldham (Smith Street)	E. Ralphs	Westhoughton (1) ton
1916	Leigh	E. Embleton	(1) Sunderland
1917	Manchester	"	(2) "
1918	Bolton (Noble Street)	Robt. Henshall	(1) Warrington
1919	Moorside	"	(2) "

Bracketed figures show number of times elected.

WE have not the names recorded of those who were Presidents at the first three Annual Meetings and also 1809 and 1812. Not counting these five years, we have had forty-two Presidents. For the last twenty-three years no brother has occupied the position for over two years, but in the first seventy-five years Alexander Denovan was President for thirty years, Peter Phillips nine, Peter Ashley five, and William Sanderson four. The latter was Secretary for eleven years, and for over thirty years he and Alexander Denovan were the two most prominent and influential men in the service of the Connexion. It is not possible to give biographical details of a few who held the office in the first forty years, but we have a more or less detailed account of all those who came later. We have already given sketches of some of these brethren, and add to them in the following list.

## RICHARD HARRISON

The first name recorded in the list of Presidents of the Connexion is that of Richard Harrison. He was one of the founders of the Church at Friars' Green, Warrington, and served it as minister until 1813, when he died in his sixty-eighth year and the thirty-third year of his ministry. The end came suddenly. He had walked ten miles out from Warrington and was returning home, when about three miles from home "‘the weary wheels of life stood still,’ and he breathed his last with those suitable words, ‘Lord, help me.’” This was on a Thursday, and on the Sunday following his body was interred in the Friars’ Green chapel ground in the presence of a numerous concourse of people, representing every Christian denomination in the town, they thus manifesting respect for his genuine piety and usefulness. Before becoming a minister of what became known as Friars’ Green Church, he was more than twenty years a Wesleyan local preacher.

In his early manhood he had experience of what witnessing for Christ then meant. This is illustrated by an incident, told in the phraseology then current. “One circumstance in particular should not be omitted, wherein the malice and cruelty of the sons of Belial were lamentably exhibited at a village near Warrington. Harrison, in company with Nicholas Manners, then a travelling preacher, while engaged in publishing the glad tidings of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, was attacked by an infuriated mob, prepared with brickbats, filth, etc., and countenanced by a man of rank and wealth, who cruelly had recourse to the drawing of blood from that noble animal the horse that he might have an opportunity of bespat-

tering the venerable persons of these messengers of peace. The events which followed should be seriously remembered by all persons inclined to persecution, for two of the principal actors in these disgraceful proceedings, together with the man of rank and wealth, were suddenly called by untimely dissolution to appear before God. 'Verily, there is a God that judges in the earth.' "

Harrison's biographer wrote: "As a preacher of the Gospel he was indefatigable in his labours. Troublesome journeys, in the face of dangers, he encountered with cheerfulness and resolution, for none of these things moved him, neither did he count his life dear to himself, so that he might finish his course with joy. . . . When explaining the Scriptures he was clear, luminous, and full; his knowledge of the Word of God was manifestly both extensive and profound; it dwelt in him richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. . . . His great theme was the love of God to man as demonstrated in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ." Harrison was President of the Conference at Macclesfield in 1808, the first meeting of which we have a printed record.

It is not recorded who was President in 1809.

#### JOHN BERISFORD

was a minister at Macclesfield, and was elected at Warrington in 1810.

#### J. CRAWSHAW

in 1811 was appointed at Macclesfield. He was a minister at Manchester (Edward Street Church) and afterwards at Stockport.

**PETER ASHLEY,**

who was Secretary of the Annual Meeting for 1810 and 1811, became President in 1813. He was re-elected in 1814 and 1815, and subsequently in 1823. He was a minister at Stockport, and afterwards at Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge. In 1822 he was appointed on two committees, one to prepare "A Deed of Settlement for Independent Methodist chapels" and the other to prepare "A General Code of Doctrines and Practical Discipline of Independent Methodists." Both matters had attention at a later period, but no copy is available.

**BENJAMIN DUFFIN**

was elected President in 1817 at Stockport, and again in 1821 and 1829. He does not appear to have been a preacher, but was a prominent member of Sheffield Church. This Church seceded from the Wesleyan New Connexion in 1814 for the "sake of liberty," and in 1824 reported 483 members. In 1830, however, the Church associated itself with the Wesleyan Protestant Methodist Association, which was subsequently merged in the United Methodist Free Church.

**RICHARD MILLS**

one of the first ministers at Friars' Green Church, was elected in 1818. In 1824 he was appointed along with Peter Phillips to draw up a code of doctrines and rules for the government of the Churches. This led to some controversy, and several members left the Church. Whether he was amongst the number is not recorded, but his name does not appear again in the list of ministers of this Church.

**W. MORTON**

was President in 1827, when the Annual Meeting was held at Warrington. His name that year appeared third on a list of seventeen ministers upon the Sheffield plan.

**PETER THORNLEY**

was the first from Folds Road Church, Bolton, to fill the office of President. He was appointed at Manchester in 1828, and died four years later, his last sermon being preached at one of the Annual Meeting services. He was the son of a soldier, and was born in America. His father settled as a publican in Bolton, but Peter broke away from the surroundings of his home after his conversion amongst the Wesleyan Methodists. Being, as he described himself, a lover of liberty, he supported Alexander Kilham and became a local preacher at the New Connexion Church in Bolton. This cause became weak, and he and others joined the Church at Folds Road. He was a man of many gifts, and became the President of Folds Road Church and was re-elected every year until his death in 1832. He died at the age of fifty-eight, and it is recorded of him that "as a Christian, his very breath was peace."

**GAMALIEL SWINDELLS**

was in 1830 at Oldham appointed President. He was foremost among those who established Stockport Church, and was probably at the first Annual Meeting of the Connexion. He was an able preacher and an earnest advocate of the free ministry. He would not even receive travelling expenses from other denominations. He declined a request to join the Wesleyan

ministry on the ground that if he did he could not preach from the words, "Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities." At sixteen years of age he was a Wesleyan class-leader, and became a local preacher in that body. Alexander Kilham had him as a supporter, and he joined himself to those who formed the New Connexion Church at Stockport. He was, however, disappointed with this Church, as he considered the power of the ministry was grasped by the "rich members of the Church." Along with other local preachers he withdrew and founded the Stockport Church, the members of which were first known as Revivalists and Free Gospellers. He had, as co-workers, Peter Ashley and J. Crawshaw. He died in 1833 in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

#### J. LEES,

the President for 1831, was a minister for many years at George Street Church, Oldham, and left descendants, who helped in the good work there.

#### THOS. JONES,

who for 1834 and 1835 filled the presidential chair, was the most prominent minister of a group of Welsh Churches in Liverpool, who were linked up with others in the Principality. These Churches were always pressing for evangelistic visits, and ultimately joined the Wesleyan Protestant Methodist Association, as the Sheffield Church had done.

#### HUMPHREY HARPER

was a preacher connected with the Manchester Church (Hanover Street) when it seceded from the Wesleyans,

and his name is on the oldest list of preachers. He afterwards became one of the ministers at Salford, and in 1837 that Church held meetings commemorative of his fifty years' labour as a preacher. Two years later he became very feeble, and the end came on January 8, 1861, within two days of his completing his seventy-seventh year. He is described "as of pleasant look and manner of address, and his religion was always hopeful." In Bolton and Manchester Circuits he was a welcome preacher. He held the office of President of the Connexion in 1836 and 1837.

#### **SAMUEL JOHNSON,**

for several years a minister at Hanover Street Church, Manchester, was the President of the Annual Meeting, held in Bolton, in 1840.

#### **JOSEPH ARMITT**

was a minister in Salford when he was elected President in 1844 at Stockport. In 1855 and 1856 he was a minister at Folds Road Church, Bolton. He died in 1862. He was a very earnest advocate in the temperance movement.

#### **EDWARD TWISS**

For twenty-one years Edward Twiss was a minister at Friars' Green Church, and was one of its most remarkable sons. He was well known in the area its immediate influence covered, and spent his childhood days in its vicinity. He was born in 1823, and rejoiced in his Methodist ancestry. On the maternal side he was the grandson of James Gandy, one of the early converts in Warrington under the ministry of



the Wesleyan Methodist preachers. These preachers first visited Warrington about the middle of the eighteenth century, and opened their commission in the Market Place, where Gandy kept a shop. The



EDWARD TWISS

mob grievously ill-treated the preachers, and one of them, Peter Jaco, the Cornish fisherman, died some three years afterwards, it was thought, from the injuries he then received. On subsequent visits to the town the preachers made Gandy's house their home, Wesley being among them. Twiss's mother used to tell how Wesley placed his hand upon her head and blessed her. Her son also, in his turn, used to relate

his recollections of the revival days at Friars' Green Chapel, and especially his memories of the half-yearly love-feasts. The friends from the circuit were accustomed to visit Friars' Green on these occasions, and marched into the town singing and inviting people to the love-feasts. Young Twiss yielded to the invitation, and heard the testimonies of what God had done. At the April love-feast in 1832 he heard Thomas Eyes tell that he "was a week old," having, through the effort of George Peck, found peace while pleading with God for pardon in the "bing" of the cowhouse where he assisted Peck, who was the cowman at Belle Field's farm, Appleton. Again he heard Thomas Eyes at the October love-feast say that he was still going on in the good way, and was now "six months and a week old." Twiss's son relates, and I quote his words: "My father, however, unhappily, through getting into the company of young men who were given up to worldliness and folly, lost the blessing he had found in Zion. He had been encouraged by his worldly friends to take the Roebuck Hotel, which was expected to be vacant in January 1843. But, while man proposed God otherwise disposed, and in mercy permitted a fever to lay him on a bed of affliction, and his medical attendant told the family that the illness seriously threatened his life. Hearing this, my father feared to be soon among the lost, and cried earnestly to God that in the midst of deserved wrath He would remember mercy. The Lord graciously heard him, and as soon as he left the sick-room he cut off all his sinful companions at a stroke, and went immediately to his friends at Friars' Green Chapel, where as a boy he first found the blessing, the pearl of great price, and by them was received with the kindness of

a Christ-like affection which knew no upbraiding. This was a fortnight before the writer (eldest son of Bro. Twiss) was born, and so I was favoured to enter a home from which strong drink and tobacco were banished, and, better still, a family altar set up and the daily reading of the Scriptures begun."

Twiss became an earnest worker at Friars' Green Church, by which he was appointed a minister in 1846. It was at this period a revival broke out, and nearly a hundred people were brought to decision. Among the list which Twiss kept occur the names of Thomas Holbrook, William Brimelow, and William Wright, who all became ministers. And then there were Twiss's wife, her sister (Mrs. Mounfield), Mrs. John Green, Mrs. Rachael Woods, Susan Mee (who later became the wife of William Brimelow), and others who have entered into rest. And here again I quote from particulars furnished by his son William: "In later years my father's personal efforts to assist in the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ were more circumscribed. He had a great desire to help the young men in the Church to a fitness for wider usefulness in the heavenly vineyard. It was this object which induced him to begin a class at Brick Street School about the year 1850, in which the subjects of grammar and logic occupied attention, solely for the purpose of an increase in power to handle the Word of God by a number of promising young men who had been brought to the Lord in this revival."

Twiss was a forcible speaker, and a diligent Bible student. He read it throughout many times, and did not neglect the best literature. He was especially familiar with Puritan writers like John Goodwin, the author of *Redemption Redeemed*, and also with John

Flavel. His first appearance at the Annual Meeting was in 1852, but he was loyal to his Church, which withdrew for some years owing to the controversy over the Testimony of Union. But in 1862 he was again at the Annual Meeting. His brethren recognised his personality and ability, and he was appointed editor



WILLIAM CRUMBLEHULME

of the Magazine. In the following year he was both Editor and Secretary, and the latter office he held in 1864-5. Then in 1866 he was President. For a period he was separated from the Connexion, but established a Church at Academy Street, Warrington, where his two sons, William and Edward, assisted him in the ministry. In 1881 he was at the Annual Meet-

ing, and was appointed Connexional Treasurer. His strenuous career ended at the age of sixty-six.

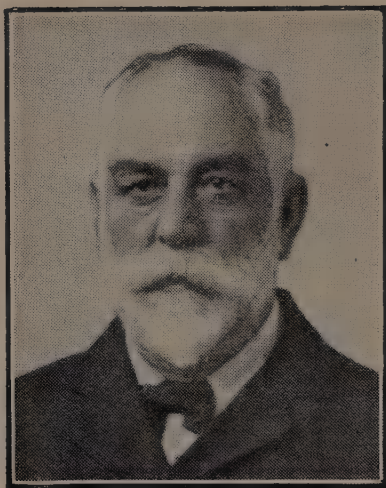
#### WILLIAM CRUMBLEHULME

was born at Bolton in 1831, and he lived until he was seventy-nine. Owing to his Sunday-school teacher at the Bolton Parish Church being opposed to total abstinence, as a youth of sixteen he was welcomed at Folds Road School, where he became a teacher and preacher. He was one of the founders of the Church at Horwich, and also of Noble Street and High Street Churches, Bolton, and was ever bent on extension. He gave himself also most earnestly to temperance work and celebrated his jubilee as an abstainer with much rejoicing. He founded the firm of William Crumblehulme and Son, kitchen-range makers, and for the last few years of his life resided at Southport. He was President of the Connexion for 1887-8, having previously been Vice-President. For fifty-one years he was in the Independent Methodist ministry.

#### THOMAS WORTHINGTON

A notable figure in our Connexion passed away by the death of Thomas Worthington, of Wigan, on May 30, 1918. He had reached his sixty-eighth year, having been born in February 1851. From his childhood he was identified with Lamberhead Green Church, and he commenced to preach when only seventeen years of age. He first attended the Annual Meeting in 1870, and four years later was appointed assistant secretary and reappointed the following year. Then came a period of service as Evangelistic Secretary. In 1887, at Colne, he was appointed Vice-President,

an office he held for two years, and in 1889 he was called to the office of President, a post he held for three years. In 1891 he was one of the representatives of the denomination at the Ecumenical Conference in America, and again in 1911 when it met in Toronto. From 1893 to 1901 he was Finance Secretary, and was very energetic in raising the special fund for extension



THOMAS WORTHINGTON

purposes. Thus for twenty-seven years he gave his time and ability unstintingly to connexional service. Subsequently he became one of the leaders in the opposition to the appointment of a Corporate Trustee, and fell out of connexional activities to a great extent. As a preacher all the Churches in the Connexion welcomed him, and he was one of our most forceful speakers at public gatherings and in Conference. From his

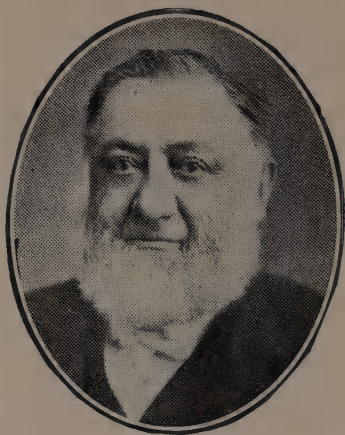
young manhood he was one of the most influential members of Wigan Circuit, being a minister of Greenough Street Church and president of the men's class. He joined that Church in the seventies, having married a daughter of the late James Proe. At one period there was no better known name in Wigan, Mr. Worthington having thrown himself whole-heartedly into the political life of the borough, and he was a member of the Town Council for several years. As a staunch total abstainer, he unceasingly advocated temperance reform. He was also much sought after as a political speaker, and was a zealous land reformer. As a young man he was on the commercial staff of the London and North-Western Railway Co., and then commenced business as an auctioneer and estate agent. This gave him opportunity to become specially acquainted with questions relating to land and agriculture, on which he was an acknowledged authority. He was a supporter and advocate of farmers' organisations, and as Chairman of the War Agricultural Committee for Wigan and District, devoted himself to the development of agriculture in the county. This he did in spite of failing health, which developed heart trouble, and was the cause of his rather sudden death on the date named, he having been at business the day before.

#### BENJAMIN DYSON

Benjamin Dyson, of Oldham, made his first appearance in the Annual Meeting at Wigan in 1858. He was born on January 20, 1830, and spent his early years in a Primitive Methodist school at Crompton (Oldham), becoming a member of the Church at thirteen years of age. Twelve months afterwards the



family removed to Lees, where he joined the Christian Brethren Church, which was identified with our denomination in 1841. He represented that Church in 1858, and became known among our Churches as an earnest worker. After serving on the Connexional Committee he was appointed Treasurer in 1888, and held the post until 1893, when he was appointed President, but did not live to preside over the assembly, his



BENJAMIN DYSON

death occurring on February 5, 1894, in his sixty-fourth year. Only once before (the case of Alexander Denovan) had a President died during his year of office. His memory is identified with Broadway Street Church, Oldham, of which he was one of the principal founders, the Church first beginning in a mission in Boston Street. He was a zealous temperance worker and also found time to discharge public duties as a citizen. For fifteen years he was a member of Oldham Town



Council, and took a deep interest in sanitary, social, and educational reform. He also succeeded in establishing a prosperous concern, employing numerous workpeople, and was on the Board of Directors of two limited companies. His last appearance in the pulpit was on the occasion of opening Barnoldswick new chapel on Sunday, October 29, 1893, when his text was, "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him,



JOHN CRUMBLEHULME

and what profit shall we have if we pray unto Him ? " Increasing weakness after this date came upon him. For thirty-four years he laboured in the Connexion.

#### JOHN CRUMBLEHULME

John Crumblehulme, one of the most familiar figures in the Connexion, for which he laboured long and earnestly, died on March 18, 1919. He took cold after preaching at the memorial service of Bro. Coucill at

Farnworth on March 9, but felt compelled to go on business to Oldham on the Tuesday following. There he became ill and was cared for at the home of Mrs. Nield, where he died from congestion of the lungs with "Hallelujah" on his lips.

He was born at Bolton on January 1, 1851. Being the eldest of a large family, he had early to begin work, and started life with little education. After serving an apprenticeship to a blacksmith, he commenced small works of his own, which he gave up to help his father to found the firm of Crumblehulme and Sons, iron-founders, of which he ultimately became managing director. In 1868 his father and others formed Noble Street Church, Bolton, and the deceased, with his brothers and sisters, left Folds Road School to aid in the new cause. It was here he commenced to preach in 1869, and, after completing fifty years of ministry, was, at his death, at the head of the plan. He had seen the circuit grow from four to eleven Churches. He greatly influenced the origin of Chorley Church, but his chief labour was given to Noble Street, and afterwards to High Street. For twenty-three years he was representative of Bolton Circuit on the Connexional Committee, where as chairman of the Evangelistic Committee he exhibited great evangelistic zeal. Indeed in all our Churches, for he was known well, he was welcomed as one who with fervour preached a full and free personal salvation. In the sphere he was led to choose, his preaching gifts, enriched with a store of personal experiences, secured him a ready welcome. He also endeared himself to many homes. As President for 1901-2 he was a marked success. From a youth he was devoted to temperance work, one of his first ventures being as

leader of the Cadets of Temperance Band. He was connected with the Good Templars, Rechabites, Sons of Temperance, and other societies, particularly the United Kingdom Alliance, being chairman of its Executive from 1916 to the time of his death. He was an attractive speaker at Band of Hope gatherings, addressing thousands of meetings, and was ever ready to advocate in greater and more representative gatherings the work which lay near to his heart. At one period, too, he was chairman of the British Anti-Tobacco and Anti-Narcotic League. He was a convinced Liberal, and helped the cause of progress. Whilst the President of the Connexion he represented it at the Methodist Ecumenical Conference in London, and later was one of the Connexion representatives at the International Peace Congress.

Some seven years previous to his death he took up his residence at Southport with his second wife. She proved a good helpmeet, like his first wife, always ready to second his efforts, and they became associated with the temperance work and public affairs of that town. He held a prominent position in the Temperance Society there, as he had done at Bolton, where he was for years president of the Temperance Union. Only in January of 1919 he was appointed Vice-President of our Church at Sussex Road, Southport. His death came as a great shock, as apparently he had fully recovered his strength after an affliction with his eyes, which left his eyesight impaired. He left a widow, two daughters, and three sons.

## ARTHUR WATSON

In 1904 Arthur Watson was appointed on the Connexional Committee as representative of Nelson and Colne Circuit, and in years of service on the Committee is the oldest member, with the exception of Richard



ARTHUR WATSON

Lee. In the following year (1895) he was elected Ministers' Assistance Fund Secretary, a post he held for two years. Then there followed two years' service as Evangelistic Secretary. Three years later (1901) he was called to the office of President, being elected at Colne. He deemed it wise to refuse on principle re-election. But in 1905 he was again yoked to office,

being elected Treasurer, a post he has held up to now. He is best known in his own district, where he has done splendid work. From childhood he has been associated with Salem Church, Nelson, his mother being one who helped to found the cause there. He eventually became superintendent of the Sunday School, but never gave up the work of teacher, having had charge of the young women's class for nearly forty years. In days when education was not as easily obtainable as at present he gave himself to study in his leisure hours, and fitted himself for a distinguished position in the life of the Church. He never felt called to become a minister, but whilst others did the work of the public ministry he has devoted himself to pastoral work, with the result that he officiates at most of the baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Quiet and unassuming in manner, tactful and persuasive in methods, immovable in principle, sane in outlook and sympathetic in judgment, he has wielded a powerful influence for good both in the business and spiritual life of the Church. A call has often come to him to enter public life as a member of the Town Council, which he has declined, but he has given public services in other ways. When the Nelson School Board was formed he was one of the first members, being elected at the top of the poll, and was Vice-Chairman on three occasions. He also devoted himself as Secretary of the Managers of Salem Day School until it became the largest school in the town, with 1,000 scholars on its books. His convictions on religious education led him to become a Passive Resister, and he had more than once to appear in Court in consequence. As President of the Nelson Free Church Council, President of Nelson Sunday School Union, and also President of

the Y.M.C.A., he has been identified with the religious life of the town and worthily represented our denomination. Colne and Nelson Circuit, of which he has been President, owes much to his work, and he is still one of the most prominent members of the Circuit Committee. In business he is a cotton manufacturer, and testimony is borne to the fact that "he is one of the few whom prosperity has not spoiled."

### GEORGE HUNTER

made his first appearance at our Annual Meeting in 1890. He had some little time before joined the Avenue Church, Leigh, having previously been a popular local preacher with the Wesleys in Leigh Circuit. A group of local preachers joined with him in a protest against the autocratic methods of the then circuit minister concerning preachers' appointments. As he is a lover of liberty, he has not had reason to repent of the step he then took, and it is gratifying to know that his relations with the Wesleyan Methodist Churches in the circuit are to-day of a very friendly character. His gifts as a preacher were soon recognised in our Churches, an esteem which has been maintained and enhanced to the present. He has also proved himself to be one of our most acceptable men on the platform, his geniality, humour, and common sense securing him delighted auditors. He represented Warrington Circuit on the Connexional Committee in 1896-7 and then occupied the post of Secretary to the Ministers' Assistance Fund for five years. In these years he won the confidence of the Churches and his fellow-members on the Committee, and so in 1903 was unanimously elected President, a

position he held for two years with distinguished ability. In 1905 he had the honour of presiding at the Centenary Conference, which was held at Smith Street Church, Oldham. He also presided over the Bristol Conference in 1907 owing to the illness of R. W. Collin. In that year he was appointed Tem-



GEORGE HUNTER

perance Secretary, an office he has retained up to the present time. He has been President of the Warrington Circuit and done splendid work in connection with his own Church, earnestly supporting it in its efforts for the formation of Churches at Tyldesley, Bright Street and Mill Street, Leigh. Born on March 31, 1858, in his jubilee year he was appointed a



magistrate, and in November of the same year became the fifth Mayor of Leigh, his native town. It was characteristic of him that he stipulated that there should be a teetotal Town Hall during his Mayoralty. He is now an alderman of the borough, and looked upon as one of the most useful members of the Council. Whilst Leigh has grown, he has also increased his business activities. In 1896 he established a brush-making business, and later added the business of a skip manufacturer, and also developed a big house-furnishing concern. He has also found time to develop the cotton industry of the town. It is recorded, as an instance of his pushfulness, that he was the first in the town to introduce a motor-car in the conduct of business. Business, however, has always been subservient with him to his church work, and he has contrived to be fresh in the pulpit and abreast of the times. He and the late John Crumblehulme attended the International Peace Congress in London in 1908. He was delighted with the Congress, of which he gave a glowing report. None regretted more than he did that the War of 1914 again postponed the era of universal peace.

#### ROBERT WATSON COLLIN

occupied the position of President for the years 1905-6. He yielded at Oldham to a requisition signed by all his fellow representatives from the Northern Churches to accept nomination, and was unanimously elected. For some years he had suffered from an affection of the throat, which made it difficult to attempt much public speaking, but he very ably presided over the meetings of the Conference and especially at Roe Green, where the controversy over the appointment of ■



Corporate Trustee reached a climax. All admired his tact and graciousness of spirit. When the Annual Meeting met the following year at Bristol he was present, but a sudden illness prevented him from taking part. He never fully recovered, and passed away in April 1909. R. W. Collin was one of the founders of the Northern Churches, and occupied the principal



ROBERT WATSON COLLIN

offices in the Sunderland Circuit and in the Northern Confederation. In the earlier years of these Churches he was much esteemed as a preacher, but had through his throat trouble to relinquish pulpit work. From the first he sought to attach the Northern Churches to the Connexion, and was a valued member of the Connexional Committee. He found time to interest himself in the Sunderland Free Church Council, and

was also a member of the Sunderland Board of Guardians. In business he was the head of the firm of Messrs. R. W. Collin and Co., engineers and iron-founders.

**W. H. RIDING**

was President for two years, 1907-1909. From 1874 he has been connected with Burnley Road Church,



W. H. RIDING

Colne, and since 1891 has been one of its recognised ministers. There he has done useful work, and also in the circuit. In 1895 he represented Brierfield Church, and made such an impression that the following year he was elected Assistant Secretary, being the colleague of F. Wilkinson, whom he succeeded as Connexional Secretary in 1899. Then for three years he

worthily discharged the duties of this office. Meanwhile he had been drawn into other public work. From 1896 to 1899 he was a member of the Colne Town Council, and was attracted to educational service. As a science teacher in the Colne Technical School he made a reputation, and held the post up to 1913. It is notable that he was winner of one of the first batch of Lancashire County Council Science Scholarships. Amongst Free Churchmen in Colne and Nelson District he is well known, as from 1900 to 1918 he was Secretary of the North-East Lancashire Free Church Federation, and has often occupied the pulpits of other denominations. When he ceased to be Connexional Secretary he was induced to become Secretary of the Ministers' Assistance Fund, and held that office until he was elected President of the Connexion.

#### ELLIS BARKER

Ellis Barker was born at Waterside, Colne, in 1862, and from childhood was identified with our Church there until he joined with others twenty-five years ago to reorganise and build up Blucher Street Church. There his work and influence were most marked, eloquent tributes being paid to this on his removal to Morecambe in 1917. At this town he is helping our mission there. As a teacher and officer he has from his young manhood given unstinted service to the Sunday School. When he accepted a call to preach his sphere became wider and he is highly esteemed by all the Churches in Colne and Nelson Circuit, of which he has been President, and is to-day one of the most valued members of the Circuit Committee. In 1896 he was appointed on the Connexional Committee

as a representative of his Circuit. His gifts were soon recognised, for in 1899 he was elected Assistant Secretary, a post he held until 1902, when he was elected Secretary. The duties of this post he performed with marked efficiency for seven years, when, by the unanimous vote of the Conference at Burnley in 1909, he



ELLIS BARKER

was appointed President, and was re-elected the succeeding year. He has since been one of the most assiduous members of the Connexional Committee, and is now chairman of the Evangelistic Department. Possessed of sound judgment, and withal somewhat cautious in action, his grasp of connexional matters enables him to do most important work. As a preacher, too, he is welcomed in our pulpits in all parts of the

Connexion. Whilst giving our Connexion the foremost place in his thought and labours, he has been able to give effective public service. In his native town he has been actively identified with the temperance movement, and has served as President of the Colne and District Temperance Society and Band of Hope Union. For a period, too, he was a member of the Trawden District Council. When a School Board was formed at Colne he was one of its first members, and eventually became chairman. The Liberal Party had also his support, as well as the Free Church Council. He is a familiar figure in the pulpits of various denominations in Colne. In commercial life he in 1885 commenced business as a grocer, a business which he conducted up to his removal to Morecambe, a step he had to take for the health of his family. Unassuming and brotherly, all who know him hold him in their warm regard, and much is expected from him in the future.

#### WILL PRICE

Will Price was elected President at Barnoldswick in 1911. He had then served on the Connexional Committee for fourteen years, first as Book-room Secretary and then Secretary of Evangelistic, Visiting, and Ministers' Assistance Fund Committees. In his own Church and in Wigan Circuit he has devoted himself to Christian service from his youth. He was born on February 19, 1865, in the Chapel House, New Springs, which is now part of New Springs premises, where for many years he was a teacher, and for the last twenty-five years head of the adult class. In 1898 he was President of Wigan Circuit, and during his term of office the circuit combined to erect Kendal Street

school-chapel, he acting as secretary for the scheme. He had the satisfaction in later years of seeing a chapel alongside. He also took a prominent part in establishing our Church at Hindley. In 1901 he was President of the Wigan and District Sunday School Union, and later became the President of the Wigan



WILL PRICE

Free Church Council. Whilst President he proved himself a quiet and convincing speaker, and a few years later became a minister in Wigan Circuit. Professionally he is with a firm of local solicitors, with whom he has been for over forty years, entering the firm's service as a boy. This firm acts as solicitors for the Connexion under Mr. Price's supervision, and he has been always willing and able to give considerable

legal aid not only to our Connexion but to individual Churches. He did special service in piloting successfully the scheme for the appointment of the Corporate Trustees. Fortunately for him and the Connexion, he has had a sympathetic helpmate in his wife, the youngest daughter of the late James Proe. All hope



JOHN WRIGHT JOHNSON

that he will be long spared to continue his useful work for the Connexion.

#### JOHN WRIGHT JOHNSON

had a tragical end to his life in 1915. Travelling with his son to a business engagement, the train came into collision and the compartment in which they were



travelling was set on fire and both were burned to death. No one doubted that he was prepared for that tragical summons. He was a preacher of the third generation, and gave himself unceasingly and very successfully to the work, especially at Robert Street Church, Sunderland. But his services were given freely to all the Churches. He was Secretary to Sunderland Circuit for several years, and then for two years President. In 1901 he was President of the Confederation, and represented it on the Connexional Committee for a number of years. He was appointed President in 1913, and re-elected the following year. For twenty-three years he was associated with the Pentecostal League of Prayer, of which he was Secretary for the North of England, and was also President and Treasurer of the Sunderland Free Church Council. For over fifteen years he was a member of the Sunderland Town Council and rendered great services as Secretary of the Mayor's Distress Fund in 1907-10, when £29,138 was administered. In business Bro. Johnson was an accountant, and was also colliery agent and coal merchant. He was cut off in the midst of his labours at the age of fifty-four.

#### EDWARD RALPHS,

who came to the Presidency in 1915, has had a busy career. At twenty years of age he was superintendent of Wingates Sunday School, an accredited minister at twenty-six, and has served his Church as President, Secretary, class-leader, and in other capacities. He became a representative of Bolton Circuit on the Connexional Committee in 1897, and he has been chairman of Book-room, Ministers' Education, and Social Service Committees; also Christian Endeavour



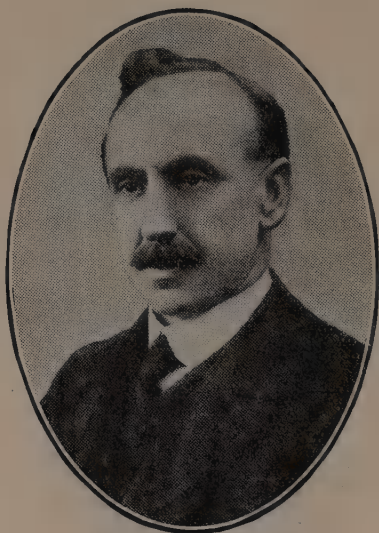
and Sunday School Secretary, Evangelistic Secretary, and Connexional Assistant Secretary. Locally he has been prominent in Free Church work, and gained educational experience as Secretary of the Wingates Day School Managers. For over twenty-eight years he has conducted the *Wingates Messenger*, and his



EDWARD RALPHS

initials, "E. R.," are known to all who read with appreciation his contributions to our Connexional Magazine. He was also editor for a period of *Beacon Light* for the Anti-Narcotic League. For twenty years he was chief clerk and cashier to a firm of contractors, a position which necessitated much absence from home and made it a special strain

to keep up pulpit appointments. He was born on April 22, 1863, and all hope he has many years of service yet to give. He was elected President of the Connexion at Smith Street, Oldham, in 1915, and



EDWARD EMBLETON

declined renomination, on the ground that there should be a one-year's Presidency.

#### EDWARD EMBLETON

was born in the colliery village of Murton, co. Durham, on November 2, 1873. Later he became a scholar at Warwick Street Sunday School, Sunderland. In it he grew up to manhood, filled various offices, became one of the ministers of the Church, and its

President. From 1896 he has earnestly laboured in the Northern Confederation, first as Secretary and then as President, and also one of its representatives on the Connexional Committee. He is by profession a solicitor's managing clerk, and his professional knowledge has been of great service to the Northern Churches. He is a member of the Executive of the Sunderland Free Church Council, and was in 1916 the President of the Sunderland and District Sunday School Union. In 1916, at Leigh, he was elected President of the Connexion and at Manchester in 1917 was reappointed for the succeeding year. He enjoys the confidence of the Churches and he labours for them unceasingly. His wife was the first President of the Women's Auxiliary, which is increasing its branches in the various circuits of the Connexion.

#### ROBERT HENSHALL

Warrington Circuit, which has Friars' Green Church as its head, up to 1872, had given five Presidents to the Connexion. In 1918 it had its sixth representative in Robert Henshall. Born in 1863, he at fifty-five was well qualified for the office. In 1900 he sat on the Connexional Committee as a representative of Warrington Circuit, and held the position for three years, when he was called to a most important task, the fostering of an old Church at Grappenhall. This task developed into the launching of a scheme which involved the erection in a new part of the township of a commodious chapel and schools at a cost of nearly £3,000. In 1913 he and his wife both laid memorial stones. A good congregation has been gathered, and by a recent effort, which realised £540, the debt now

stands at £500. The Church is worthily meeting the needs of a modern suburban locality. Though the Connexion has not had the benefit of his experience for a long period in administrative work, our Churches



ROBERT HENSHALL

have eagerly welcomed him as a minister. He was called to preach at only nineteen years of age, but from the first his abilities were recognised, and he was soon looked upon as being among those in the first rank of our ministry. He, by diligent culture, main-

tained his early reputation, and now, after thirty-six years in the ministry, he is known and esteemed by all our Churches, the majority of which he has visited.

When he was a boy of fourteen he joined Friars' Green School, and in later years became the Church Secretary, and for a long period was its President. He also manifested practical interest in the Brick Street Church, which has always had his sympathy and assistance. Happily for him, his wife has had the same interests and religious associations as himself, and both are held in high esteem at Friars' Green Church. A happy instance of this esteem was given about five years ago, when Bro. and Sister Henshall celebrated their silver wedding, and, instead of personal gifts being made, there was over £50 contributed to the building fund of Grappenhall new church. Mrs. Henshall is President of the Warrington Circuit Women's Auxiliary. She comes of an old Independent Methodist ancestry, and her husband maintains that it is largely due to her exertions, and those of the late Edward Howard, that the new building at Grappenhall was erected. This is certain, that both at Friars' Green and at Grappenhall, as well as elsewhere, they both have been abundant in good works.

Robert Henshall has also been able to give public service. As a Liberal he, in November 1910, won a seat as a representative of Latchford Ward on the Warrington Town Council, and has sat for that ward continuously until now. In November 1919 he was unanimously elected Mayor of his native town, and recently was appointed a magistrate for the borough. He obtained what was then termed education in his early days at the National Schools, and in his youth acquired skill as a brushmaker. This skilled artisanship did not

satisfy the wider ambition of his manhood, and he is now at the head of a firm which is well known for its "Preserved Food Manufactures."

The Churches know and appreciate the gifts of Bro. Henshall, and a local newspaper, which gave a lengthy sketch of his career when he was appointed President, observed: "Those who know anything of public work in Warrington know how well read he is and how full he is of wise saws and modern instances, which he can effectively employ at the shortest notice. He can make apt quotations on almost any subject from almost any author or speaker on almost any occasion." In other words, in addition to natural gifts of no ordinary character, he has literary treasures, the fruit of study and wide reading.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CONNEXIONAL SECRETARIES

WE do not know who were Secretaries at the first three Conferences, nor who was Secretary of 1809 Conference. There are forty-four recorded names, and of these William Sanderson gave eleven years' service, William Oxley ten, E. Barker seven years', and James Vickers eleven years' (holding the record for length of consecutive secretarial service). Seven brethren who have been Secretaries still survive: S. Cooke, M. Kennedy, R. Foulds, F. Wilkinson, W. H. Riding, E. Barker, and James Vickers, the two latter being still on the Connexional Committee. Of the early Secretaries we have little record. The list, as far as can be ascertained, is given at the close of the chapter.

T. GREGORY, of Macclesfield.

PETER ASHLEY, of Stockport.

J. GOODIER, Wilmslow.

WILLIAM MCGUINNESS, a minister at Friars' Green, Warrington, who held office in 1814 and 1819.

WILLIAM MASSEY, of Warrington, Secretary for 1815.

J. HIGSON, a minister of Blackburn Church, who held the post in 1816 and 1817.

JOHN SHAW was one of the original members of the Band-room at Manchester, and for more than

twenty years was one of the ministers of Hanover Street Church. It is recorded that he "evinced good judgment and preached sound doctrine," and it is added he was "poor and had a large family." He died within three hours' sickness from an attack of cholera on August 10, 1832. In 1818 he served the Conference as Secretary.

GEORGE TURTON, Sheffield, in 1820 and 1826, a minister very active at this period in connexional affairs, and who went on several missionary tours.

W. H. STEPHENSON, 1821. He was the leader of a group of Churches in Durham, and gave information to Alexander Denovan which led him to join the Connexion. He constantly visited the Churches in Lancashire.

ALEXANDER DENOVAN, 1822-7 and 1834.

SAMUEL BALMER, of Warrington, was one of the early adherents of Independent Methodism at Friars' Green Church, and one of the ministers of the Church in 1815. During the last five years of his life he was afflicted with physical disability, but gave evidence of his fidelity, making, says his obituary, "his sick chamber a preaching station." He died on February 21, 1836, in the forty-second year of his age. "His property, his labours, his prayers, and influence were all concentrated and directed to the promotion of the Kingdom of his Saviour." He filled the post of Secretary in 1823.

JOHN MALLINSON was a minister at Folds Road Church, Bolton, and was Secretary when the Conference met there in 1824. This was the first time the Conference met at Bolton, and it is related that the proceedings commenced with public worship at five



a.m. He migrated to America in 1826, where the rest of his life was spent.

M. McMILLAN, of Earlsheaton.

J. DAVIES, Lancaster, a minister of Lancaster Church.

HENRY PERKINS, of Manchester, a minister at Hanover Street Church.

JOHN MAYALL, of George Street Church, Oldham, a schoolmaster.

S. PEACOCK, a minister at Stockport Church.

WILLIAM DAVIES, a minister at Lancaster Church.

T. H. MASSEY, a minister at Nantwich Church.

JOHN KELLY represented Macclesfield Church 1815-18, in the latter year being returned as a preacher. He then removed to Manchester, and in 1842 the Manchester Church Report contained the following reference to him: "We have also suffered bereavement in the loss of our beloved brother, John Kelly, who has been taken from a state of deep poverty and suffering to behold the glories of the Lamb amidst His Father's throne." In 1837 and again in 1840 he was Conference Secretary.

SAMUEL ROBERTS, for over twenty-five years an active worker at Folds Road Church and schools, Bolton, was Secretary in 1838-9. His father was a Wesleyan circuit minister, and Samuel received his education at Kingswood School. By profession he was a schoolmaster, and for some years carried on a school in Folds Road premises. He was a class-leader, and took much interest in the musical services, especially at school anniversaries. He is remembered as a man distinguished by a spirit of humility, gentleness, and forbearance. He died on June 21, 1850, at the age of seventy-four.

JOSEPH HOLMES, a minister at Roe Green and Sindsley Churches.

JAMES BENTLEY, an active member of Stockport Church. Five years Secretary.

WILLIAM SANDERSON, Liverpool, for eleven years Secretary.

THOMAS DUNNING, a minister at Stockport Church.

J. FURNESS, 1849, a minister at Lancaster Church, and who advocated a monthly instead of a quarterly magazine.

JAMES GANDY, Connexional Secretary in 1852, was a Methodist by ancestry. His grandfather gave hospitality to John Wesley and the latter preached from Gandy's house steps in the Market Place at Warrington. Gandy's father attended the first meeting of the Independent Methodists when they met in a room off Sankey Street, and continued a member until his death in 1861. James Gandy was born in 1816, and was a teacher at the "free evening school," held at Friars' Green in 1834. A Total Abstinence Society was started at Friars' Green in 1834, and he was one of the first secretaries. He was an associate of Peter Phillips, and, yielding to his persuasion, he became a preacher, a position he held for twenty-two years. He preached Peter Phillips's funeral sermon. As a preacher his sermons were prepared with great care, and were invariably accompanied by a powerful influence. Gandy was often called upon for special sermons in the Connexion. By profession he was a schoolmaster. He died on July 10, 1888, at the age of seventy-two. His name is honoured to-day at Friars' Green Church.

SAMUEL FITZGERALD, minister at Lancaster Church,

EDWARD TWISS, a minister at Friars' Green Church.

WILLIAM OXLEY, Bradford Church, Manchester. He died at the age of sixty-four in February 1898,



WILLIAM OXLEY

and had been a preacher in Manchester Circuit for forty years. He was in his early years at Hanover Street Church, and then was instrumental with others in founding the Church at Bradford, where he was unceasing

in his efforts, and supported the cause most liberally. He was quiet and precise in his demeanour, and of a lovable nature. His purity of motive and strong conscientiousness were very evident. To him Independent Methodism meant the realisation of pure Christianity, and speaking as a fairly prosperous business man, he said, "It is much easier for a prosperous business man to give £50 or £100 a year towards paying somebody else to do the Lord's work than engage himself in the work." To the cause he gave both time and money, and for over twenty years, in addition to his labours at the Church of which he was a minister, he gave connexional service. With intervals he was Connexional Secretary for ten years and was President of the Connexion in 1879 and 1881. One-tenth of his income was his standard minimum of his contribution to religious and charitable purposes. He married a daughter of Alexander Denovan, and she sympathetically aided him in his self-sacrificing work. Of him it can be truly said, "The memory of the just is blessed."

JAMES VICKERS, who died on August 17, 1879, aged fifty-seven years, was the Secretary in 1867-8. He was the eldest son of Richard Vickers, one of the founders of Folds Road Church, Bolton, and was born in 1822 (the year in which the first chapel was built) in a house in close proximity to the edifice. It was in this locality he spent his life. He served the church for sixteen years as secretary, and the school as vice-superintendent for eighteen years, and became a minister in 1868. As Secretary of the Connexion in 1867-8 he took a prominent part in shaping a policy of advance and consolidation initiated in his term of office. He was an eloquent speaker, and his gifts were

not only used for his Church and Connexion, but for the advancement of the Liberal cause. His memory is still cherished by those who came under his wise and inspiring influence at Folds Road School. His later years were full of weariness owing to a nervous affliction caused by a railway accident.

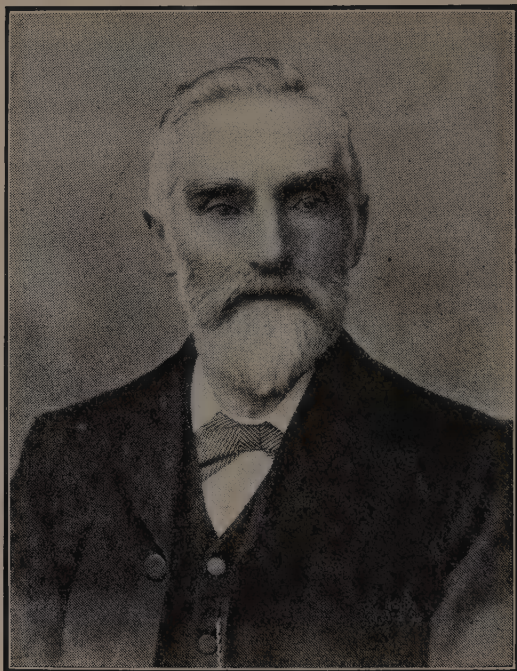


JAMES VICKERS

WILLIAM BAMBER was in early manhood one of the ministers at Folds Road Church, Bolton, and served as Secretary in 1871. Afterwards he joined the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion and interested himself in Sunday-school work, being a school superintendent for many years. In business he was a master cotton-spinner, and was prominent in municipal life.

His declining years were marked by feebleness, and he died at the age of eighty in January, 1918.

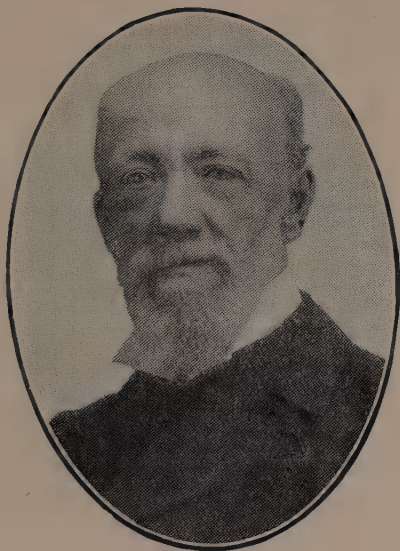
JASPER ISTERLING was a preacher well known in the Connexion for over fifty years. He came from



JASPER ISTERLING

Germany as a young man totally unacquainted with the English tongue. But he mastered it and was able to speak fluently in it. He read his German translation of the Bible and was often able to give an illustration from this translation. He was a member of

Elizabeth Street Church, Liverpool, for sixty-two years and for over fifty years one of its ministers. It can truly be said that he was faithful to his office. In his daily occupation he was also faithful, being with a firm of Liverpool fruit merchants for fifty years, and the firm, in appreciation of his services, bestowed upon



WILLIAM WRIGHT

him a suitable pension, so that his last years were spent in comfort and leisure; but they had to be quiet, as he practically lost his eyesight and was very deaf. He was elected Secretary of the Connexion at the Annual Meeting held in Liverpool in 1872. He held the office for only twelve months, but he gave service afterwards on the Connexional Committee, and was



a constant attender at the Annual Meetings. The summons came in January 1917, his wife having predeceased him by only five weeks. Among his last words, addressed to his daughter, were these: "Won't your mother be surprised to see me so soon?" He was eighty-two years of age.

**WILLIAM WRIGHT**, who filled the office of Secretary in 1873, was one who recalled Peter Phillips, and often spoke of the distinctive dress and customs of the old workers at Friars' Green, when the men wore knee - breeches and broad - brimmed hats and the women the old Quaker headgear and plain dress. He early gave himself to Christian service, and was for over fifty years a preacher at Friars' Green Church, being well known up to middle life in all the churches. He loved to defend our principles by voice and pen. It was said of him, "longwinded when not listened to, not a word too many when heard with attention." Many remember him as one who encouraged them in the ministry. He died October 30, 1913, aged seventy-six.

**JOHN WILD** was Secretary of Connexion in 1885 and 1886, and had before then rendered connexional service. His chief work, however, was at Smith Street Church, Oldham, where he was much beloved. For forty years he was teacher of the men's class and from 1865 to his death, in June 1894, was a minister of the Church and for a similar period (twenty-nine years) was President of the Church. He took great delight in singing, and for thirty years was choirmaster. As the precentor he was noted at the Annual Meetings. He was a man diligent in business. Commencing work at a printing works at the age of thirteen, he attained the position of foreman and the partner in the con-



cern, eventually becoming sole proprietor. Outside the Church he gave service to the Oldham Town Mission and for a number of years was one of the secretaries of the institution. He was born July 23, 1838, and as a boy joined the Sunday School, with which he was connected all his life. In the fifty-six



JOHN WILD

years of his life he gave unstinted service, and in his latest hours was singing. He led a blameless life, and had a beautiful character, being steadfast of purpose and filled with a consuming desire to serve God.

ALDERMAN ROBINSON FOULDS, J.P., served as Connexional Secretary for five years (1888-92) and then was elected Vice-President of the Connexion. It

was a disappointment when he declined the premier office. He became Mayor of Colne in 1899, the first Independent Methodist who had filled such an office. Others since have had this civic honour. He was born November 13, 1857, the son of Thomas Foulds, one of the first group of ministers at Primet Bridge (Burnley



ROBINSON FOULDS

Road), Colne. The Sunday School was his special sphere of service, being first secretary, then teacher, and finally superintendent. At one period he was President of the Colne and Nelson Circuit. Ultimately he found his chief work lay in the civic sphere. Whilst building up a large business he has fulfilled his public duties with marked efficiency, and Colne is proud of

him as a citizen. He continues to give his aid to the Connexion.

**FREDERICK WILKINSON** as a boy became a scholar at Folds Road Sunday School, Bolton, then a teacher, and in 1887 a minister on full plan. About this time he migrated with others to found Chalfont Street



**FREDERICK WILKINSON**

Church, which he served as a minister and President. He stayed there until 1902, when he became a minister at Beverley Road Church and helped to establish the cause there. During these years he did much connexional service. He was elected on the Connexional Committee in 1888 as a representative of Bolton Circuit, and five years afterwards was appointed Connexional

Secretary, a post he held with distinction until 1898, when he was elected Vice-President, a position he filled until 1901, when the office was abolished. As Vice-President in 1900 he ably presided at the Annual Meeting at Stretford, the then President not being able to be present. During these years he was cordially welcomed in the pulpits of the Connexion, and when he had to give up ministerial work, owing to being compelled to reside at St. Anne's on account of his wife's health, it was a matter of much regret. Whilst rendering service to the Churches and the Connexion he had been steadily mounting to an influential position in the educational world. He was one of those who were drawn into the educational profession after the School Board Act had come into operation. As a pupil teacher at Folds Road Board School he won distinction and kept up his reputation during his college training. On leaving college he was appointed head master at Noble Street School and threw himself into progressive movements. Bolton had not then a technical school, and mainly through his efforts a fund was collected and the Mechanics Institute was transformed into a Technical School. At a financial sacrifice he became its Principal. Such was the confidence he inspired in that post that when the Education Act of 1902 was passed he was invited to become Director of Education for the borough. In that post of influence he has remained. As President of the Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes and in other ways he has become a potent influence in educational affairs. He has maintained throughout the note of devotion to duty, a high standard of efficiency, and been an advocate of total abstinence in high places. He is now sixty years of age.

JAMES VICKERS was elected Secretary at Burnley in 1909, and has retained the office for eleven years, the only one, so far, who has held the post continuously for that period. He joined the Connexional Committee in 1901 as a representative of Bolton Circuit. His acquaintance with connexional affairs, however, dates



JAMES VICKERS

from 1871, when he attended the Conference at Bolton. He has been present at nearly all the Conferences since then, and for twelve years furnished the Conference reports for the Magazine and also of the First Autumnal Convention. He has often assisted in this particular service since. For the last forty-nine years his contributions to the Magazine have appeared in various forms, and in the Connexional Centennial year

he collaborated in the production of the *Short History of Independent Methodism*. His latest literary efforts have been the sketches of Independent Methodist worthies, which are reproduced in this volume. He was appointed on the *Bolton Evening News* staff as a reporter in 1870, and subsequently became a sub-editor. After spending twenty-nine years, with a brief break, with the firm, he accepted an invitation to be manager and editor of the *Horwich Chronicle*, where the work was less strenuous, and gave him an opportunity of doing more connexional service. There he remained for fifteen years, when he felt free to return to Bolton and devote his leisure to church and connexional work. He belongs to the third generation of Independent Methodists, as his grandfather was one of the founders of Folds Road Church in 1820. It was at this Church he learned to love our denominational principles. Here, too, he became a convinced abstainer and temperance worker, and his sympathies were won for all progressive movements. As a youth of eighteen he was one of the group who founded Noble Street Church, where he became successively teacher, officer, and minister. He commenced to preach in 1875 and has since then continuously met the calls from his own Church and circuit: also, as opportunity offered, going farther afield, having preached in most of our churches. When only twenty-four years of age he became Circuit Secretary, a post he filled, with brief breaks, for seventeen years, and was also for two years Circuit President. On the Connexional Committee as Chairman successively of the Ministers' Education Committee and the Bookroom Committee, he has given particular help to both departments. Fortunately, he married one who sympathised with his

work, and has done much to enable him to accomplish it. They both rejoice in a family of three sons and a daughter, who have carved out honourable positions. He was born on July 21, 1851, and, though never of strong physique, it is hoped that his active service will continue far beyond the allotted span. Owing to his wife's health he this year removed to Southport.

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Residence.</i>	<i>Years.</i>	<i>Total Years.</i>
T. Gregory	Macclesfield	1808	1
Peter Ashley	Stockport	1810-11	2
J. Goodier	Wilmslow	1813	1
Wm. McGuinness	Warrington	1814-19	2
W. Massey	„	1815	1
J. Higson	Blackburn	1816-17	2
J. Shaw	Manchester	1818	1
Geo. Turton	Sheffield	1820-26	2
Wm. McMillan	Earlsheaton	1825	1
W. H. Stephenson	Gateshead	1821	1
Alex. Denovan	Glasgow	1822-7 1834	3
S. Balmer	Warrington	1823	1
John Mallinson	Bolton	1824	1
Wm. Morton	Sheffield	1828	1
J. Davies	Lancaster	1829	1
H. Perkins	Manchester	1830	1
J. Mayall	Oldham	1831-6	2
S. Peacock	Stockport	1832	1
Wm. Davis	Lancaster	1833	1
T. H. Massey	Nantwich	1835	1
J. Kelly	Manchester	1837-1840	2
S. Roberts	Bolton	1838-9	2
J. Holmes	Worsley	1841	1
J. Bentley	Stockport	1842-3-4-7-8	5
W. Sanderson	Liverpool	1845 1850-1-3-4-5-6-9- 1860-1-2	11
Thos. Dunning	Stockport	1846	1
J. Furness	Lancaster	1849	1
Jas. Gandy	Warrington	1852	1
S. Fitzgerald	Lancaster	1857-8	2

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Residence.</i>	<i>Years.</i>	<i>Total Years.</i>
E. Twiss	Warrington	1863-4-5	3
Wm. Oxley	Manchester	1866-9 1870-1874-8	10
James Vickers	Bolton	1867-8	2
W. Bamber	Bolton	1871	1
Jasper Isterling	Liverpool	1872	1
Wm. Wright	Warrington	1873	1
Alfred Roscoe	Bolton	1879-1880-2-3	4
Silas Cooke	Manchester	1881	1
M. Kennedy	Wigan	1884	1
J. Wild	Oldham	1885-6-7	3
Robinson Foulds	Colne	1888-9 1900-1-2	5
Fred. Wilkinson	Bolton	1893-2-5-6-7-8	6
W. H. Riding	Colne	1889 1900-1	3
E. Barker	Colne	1902-3-4-5-6-7-8	7
James Vickers	Bolton	1909 1910-11-12-13-14- 15-16-17-18-19	11



## CHAPTER XVII

### AUDITORS, TREASURERS, AND FINANCE SECRETARIES

OUR first Connexional Treasurer was James Firth, of Oldham, who was appointed in 1859 and held the office for five years, when he was succeeded by William Wright, of Warrington, who served from 1865-7. Then came George Winterburn, of Bolton, who was elected in 1868, and continued until 1877, with an interval of 1872-3, when W. Bamber, of Bolton, had the post. Then came James Proe, Wigan; M. Kennedy, Southport; E. Twiss, Warrington; T. Makin, Urmston; B. Dyson, Oldham; R. Lee, Wigan; Joseph Mounfield, Warrington; and in 1905 our present Treasurer, A. Watson, of Nelson, was appointed.

It was not until 1883 that the Auditor became an annual appointment. Silas Cooke was the first Auditor, and was succeeded by A. Roscoe and J. Settle, Bolton, and J. F. Wood, of Oldham. Since 1902 A. Crossley, of Oldham, has held the office. In 1891 the office of Finance Secretary was created. Silas Cooke, a chartered accountant, consented to fill the position, and held it for two years. In 1893 T. Worthington was appointed and he was annually re-elected

until 1901, being succeeded in 1902 by J. F. Wood, who had been Auditor for eleven years. He held the office for five years and was followed by Hartley Barrett, a chartered accountant, in 1908. The post then had become a very onerous one, and the funds have steadily progressed. Only four brethren have held office as Financial Secretary, and they have given their time



SILAS COOKE

and skill without fee. A record of T. Worthington is on a previous page, and brief references to the others here follow.

SILAS COOKE, who was Secretary in 1880, was a minister in Manchester Circuit, and did connexional work as Finance Secretary and Auditor from 1885 to 1886. He is by profession an accountant. For many years he was welcomed in the pulpits of the Connexion. He now resides at Egremont, Cheshire, but, though debarred by distance from attending any of our Churches, he still takes an active interest in the

denomination. He is a man of intellectual gifts, and takes pleasure in poetical contributions to the Magazine.

J. F. WOOD is one of the most esteemed members of Oldham Circuit. He has been associated with Smith Street Church from childhood, and as teacher, superintendent, and in other capacities has given un-



J. F. WOOD

tiring service. As Auditor, and afterwards as Finance Secretary, he has rendered valuable connexional service.

### HARTLEY BARRETT

One of the most trusted men in Colne and Nelson Circuit is Hartley Barrett. He has spent most of his life at Salem Church and School, and given unstintingly of his service as Sunday-school teacher and organist of the Church. He has also been President of the Circuit.

## 268 AUDITORS, TREASURERS, SECRETARIES

Some years ago he took an official position with the Barnoldswick District Council, and as a chartered



HARTLEY BARRETT

accountant has direction of its finances. Since 1908 he has been Finance Secretary of the Connexion.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARIES

THE appointment of Evangelistic Secretary was allocated to the Annual Meeting in 1891, and splendid work has been done by the Secretaries and their Committees. The first Secretary was Thomas Robinson, of Stretford (now Sir Thomas Robinson, M.P.), who was re-elected until 1896, when A. Watson, Nelson, succeeded him. Then came M. Kennedy, W. Price, T. Backhouse (Liverpool), E. Ralphs, C. Pennington, and again W. Price. The present Secretary is L. W. Inman, of Oldham.

In 1891 the Secretary of the Ministers' Assistance Fund became a Connexional officer. The first Secretary was James Bond, of Westhoughton, and he has had as his successors J. Hudlass, H. Kennedy, G. Hunter, W. H. Riding, Jonas Sharp, and W. Price.

It was felt in 1894 that special attention should be given to Sunday Schools and the formation of Christian Endeavour Societies. R. Brimelow energetically took up the latter, and R. Pennington, New Springs, the former; but in a few years efforts centred on Christian Endeavour work, and the Christian Endeavour Secretary became an Annual Meeting appointment in 1899, when A. Mounfield was elected Secretary. He held the position for two years, and was succeeded by

J. W. Hancock in 1900, who occupied the position for ten years, then becoming Foreign Mission Secretary. Edward Ralphs, of Wingates, followed until the appointment of William Shoesmith, of Nelson, in 1912, the latter specially joining Sunday School supervision to the Committee's work, and he has since very energetically and successfully performed the duties of the office.

The Connexion has always been in ardent sympathy with temperance work, and it was deemed wise in 1902 to form a separate Committee and Secretary. The first Secretary, elected in 1903, was Samuel Marsh, of Moorside, an enthusiast in the cause, and on his death G. Hunter, of Leigh, was elected to the office, and he has held it ever since.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE MAGAZINE AND ITS EDITORS

IT was not until May 1823 that the Annual Meeting decided to publish a magazine. Bro. Denovan was appointed editor, and it came out quarterly at the price of 6d. The first issue made its appearance in August, and continued until 1830. Its title was *Independent Methodist Magazine*. In the early 'forties another attempt was made to publish a magazine in the form of a sixpenny monthly, but it came to nought, and in 1846 Bro. Denovan was again induced to be editor of a monthly magazine, published at one penny, under the title of *Magazine of the United Free Gospel Churches*, and it appeared from January 1847 to April 1849. Then came the *Free Gospel Advocate*, a penny monthly journal, with Brethren Fitzgerald and Sanderson as editors, until 1852. Bro. Fitzgerald next became sole editor until 1859. Then in 1859 Bro. Sanderson took sole charge, and the title was altered to *Free Gospel Magazine*. He was succeeded in 1862 by Bro. E. Twiss, who continued editor until 1864, when the penny monthly issue ceased. Bro. Denovan again resumed editorship with a quarterly magazine at 6d. This gave place in 1869 to the *Independent Methodist Magazine*, a monthly issue at 2d., a price at which it continued until 1902. To satisfy some

Churches, who clung to the title of Free Gospel Churches, the magazine was issued to them as the *Free Gospel Magazine*, a custom which ceased when there was an agreement that the Connexion should be known solely as Independent Methodist. One of the chief reasons for reverting to the older price of 1d. was that there was a greater prospect of a larger circulation at that price. This anticipation was realised, as the circulation sprang up from 2,300 to 5,000 monthly. Unfortunately the circulation has not been maintained at that figure, and is now 4,600. In several circuits the Magazine has a local supplement. The Magazine was never more powerful in its influence, and is eagerly looked for by its readers. On the whole the Magazine has been very fortunate in its editors. During William Brimelow's editorship the Churches were stimulated to give records of their doings, and he used its pages to develop connexional growth and enterprise. The same policy has been continued by the present editor. It is notable that all the editors have freely given their services, and no fee has been given for any articles which have appeared in the pages of the Magazine. The Bookroom Secretaries have been equally zealous in voluntary service. A list of editors is given below. Fuller references to these have already appeared in previous pages.

**ALEXANDER DENOVA,**  
1823-30, 1847-9, 1865-8.

**WILLIAM SANDERSON,**  
1849-52, 1859-61.

**SAMUEL FITZGERALD**

was co-editor with William Sanderson from 1849 to 1852, and was himself editor from 1853 to 1858. He



entered our ministry in Oswestry Church. From that district he went to Lancaster, and laboured in connection with our Church there. Whilst a member there he was Connexional Secretary for 1857-8. Ultimately he felt constrained to join the Wesleyan Church in that town, and was a popular local preacher. His biographer records that he was "a man of wide culture, and one of the most sincere and earnest spirits living among us." He was twenty-two years the confidential clerk of Messrs. Sharp and Sons, solicitors, and was well known to the leading inhabitants of the town. His wife was also a woman with many accomplishments, and she wrote several books, one of which, *The Lancasters*, had a wide circulation in our Churches. Samuel Fitzgerald died on May 17, 1878, at the age of fifty-six.

**EDWARD TWISS,**  
1862-4.

**WILLIAM BRIMELOW,**  
1868 to 1896.

**RICHARD BRIMELOW**

is a member of the third generation of a family which has been associated with Independent Methodism since its origin. He is the eldest son of the late William Brimelow, whose father was a preacher at Friars' Green Church, Warrington. He was educated at Bolton High School, and then, having served as pupil teacher at Folds Road Board School (1875-80), he went to Borough Road Training College, London. From there he returned to Bolton, and became a second master, and subsequently a head master under the School Board. After eight years' successful service he deter-

mined to carry on a bookseller's business in Southport. There he has resided since 1891, and there his family of three has grown up. His only son, William, emigrated to Australia, where he joined the Australian forces. He fought in the Dardanelles and in France, where he was killed in action on October 14, 1917. He has also



RICHARD BRIMELOW

a daughter in Tasmania and another in Southport. Whilst in Bolton Bro. Brimelow was first a scholar at Folds Road Sunday School, and then for eight years teacher of the 3rd Men's Class. He commenced to preach in 1883, and when he became a resident at Southport he continued in this work. Since 1895 he has been one of the ministers of Old Park Lane Church. His musical talents and tastes are well

known. He was, therefore, able in 1883 to give assistance to the Connexional Tune-book Committee, and the Tune-book published in 1884 was passed through the Press under his supervision. He also did the work of classifying, indexing, and harmonising. When the present Hymnal, of which his father was editor, was issued in 1892, he, along with Thomas Robinson, of Stretford, produced the Tune-book which accompanied it. The book contains many tunes of his own composition. Family associations led him early to take interest in connexional affairs, and in 1883 he attended the Annual Meeting. He became a contributor to the Magazine, and when his father had a serious illness in 1886, he, with the help of his brother James, edited it. From that year to 1896 he edited the Magazine under his father's supervision. In the latter year he became sole editor, and in 1901 relinquished the position, after fifteen years' close connection with the Magazine. The Annual Meeting in 1902 expressed its sense of his services by presenting him with an illuminated address and a bookcase bureau. During these years he was an active member of the Bookroom Committee, and introduced the Bible trade connection. When the Christian Endeavour movement was adopted by the Annual Meeting in 1893 he became the Secretary of the Committee, and travelled over the Connexion in advocating the establishment of Christian Endeavour Societies. Whilst at Southport he has had the pleasure of seeing a new chapel erected by the Old Park Road Church, a work to which he gave valuable help. Outside the denomination his activities have been numerous. He was one of the first members of the Southport Free Church Council, and has acted as its Secretary. He was also one of the founders of the

Southport Christian Endeavour Union, and its first Secretary. He is Secretary of the Southport and District Local Preachers' and Christian Workers' Association, and local Secretary of the Religious Tract Society and the London City Mission Society. He has also been President of the Southport Circuit.

### ARTHUR MOUNFIELD,

1901-20.

Our present editor, Arthur Mounfield, born in 1871, is the only son of the late Joseph Mounfield, a member of a family associated with Peter Phillips, and intimately concerned with Independent Methodism in Warrington. When seventeen years of age he commenced to preach, and was cordially welcomed in circuits outside his own; but unfortunately, through not having robust health, he has had for some years to limit the circle of his preaching engagements. He is now one of the mainstays of Stockton Heath Church, where the first Total Abstinence Society was formed, and he has written a very interesting history of the Church under the title, *A Village Centenary: The Independent Methodist Church at Stockton Heath, Warrington, 1806-1906*. He is also author of *The Beginnings of Total Abstinence*, and the *Parables of Caleb Cobbleall*, the latter first appearing in the Magazine, and happily preserved to us in book form. The readers of the Magazine have had ample evidence of his literary standard. The Centenary Souvenir of the Connexion, of which he was editor, owes much of its value to the chapters he contributed to it. When it was decided that our denomination should enter upon foreign missionary work he became Chairman of the Committee,

and much of our success is due to the thought and service he gave to it. All hope that he may have strength for many years to come to do things for Independent Methodism, which lies near his heart. His articles on Peter Phillips and the origin of Friars' Green Church, which appeared in the *Magazine*, were very informing and much appreciated. Through the medium of the *Warrington Examiner* he has done illuminating work on the history of Warrington, and his contributions have been eagerly welcomed and won high commendation. Chief among these articles were a series which told *The History of Warrington Nonconformity*. A photo of Bro. Mounfield was not available when this volume went to press.

## CHAPTER XX

### BOOKROOM SECRETARIES

A MOST important step was taken in 1869, when it was decided to organise a Bookroom department. Up to this period the distribution of magazines and the printing of the Annual Meeting Year Book had been undertaken sometimes by individuals and at other times by Churches, and there had been no opportunity to permanently centralise the work. In view of the approaching publication of the Connexional Hymn-book, which was being prepared, the Annual Meeting held at Glasgow in 1869 resolved :

“That a Publishing or Bookroom Committee be established, who shall be entrusted with the issuing of all connexional publications, including Magazines and Hymn-books, and who shall also, on behalf of the Annual Meeting, hold possession of all such publications.”

Following upon this resolution it was agreed that the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, and three brethren connected with the Church where the Committee might be located, constitute the Committee. The Committee was first located at Bolton, and there the headquarters of the Bookroom remained until 1897, though in after-years the Committee became a section of the Connexional Committee's work.

Bolton Church elected Brethren James Vickers, William Bamber, and R. Entwistle to act with the connexional officers. Bro. Entwistle was appointed Secretary. He agreed to see to the distribution of the Magazine, and the writer recalls his own first introduction to the Bookroom, when he acted as assistant in this work. In their first report the Committee observed: "There are, no doubt, some who will be enthusiastic enough to think that some day it (the establishment of the Bookroom) will be looked back upon as forming an epoch in the history of the Connexion." Seeing now what the Bookroom Committee has done, all are agreed that its appointment was an epoch. A unifying influence in the Connexion was introduced and maintained under its auspices.

The Bookroom undertook the publication of the Magazine, which then appeared in a new form at 2d. monthly, and obtained a circulation of up to 2,600 monthly. But its great work was the introduction to the Churches of the new Hymn-book, a book which was everywhere welcomed, and was a source of justifiable pride and satisfaction to the Churches. It was at first thought that a paid Secretary would have to be engaged, but this was avoided by an arrangement that the residence of the Secretary should be the location of the Bookroom, and that a rent should be paid for the use of a room in which the stock was stored. Thus throughout our history not only have the literary services of editor of the Magazine and compilers of the Hymn-book and Tune-book been voluntary, but even the oversight of the distribution has been voluntary. In recent years the cost of distribution of the Magazine has been part of the contract with the printer, and the Hymn-book and Tune-book have

also been stocked with the printers and sent out by them.

As already stated, Robert Entwistle was the first Secretary, and Bolton brethren were secretaries until 1896. In 1870 came Joseph Settle for three years, followed by Alfred Roscoe for six years. Robert Cunliffe held the office for 1881-2, and was followed by Daniel Howarth, who held the post for six years. On his retirement Alfred Roscoe consented again to hold the office, which he retained for four years. Henry Brimelow was his successor, and also held the office four years. At this period (1896) premises were rented in Wigan, the interest of Wigan brethren was enlisted, and Will Price (Wigan), was Secretary for two years; Louis Boardman (Wigan), one year; Charles Pennington (Wigan), two years; Thomas Beattie (Wigan), three years; John Wood (Wigan), four years; Thomas Perry (Wigan), two years. In 1911 John Battersby (Lowton) accepted the office, and he has held it up to the present time.

#### ROBERT ENTWISTLE

was the first Secretary of the Bookroom, and in after-years as Chairman he contributed in no small degree to the success of that department. He was one of the editors of the first Connexional Hymn-book, and was engaged on preparing the revised Hymnal, along with W. Brimelow, when his death came on May 29, 1898, in his sixty-third year. His father, who was a minister at Folds Road Church, Bolton, died young, but he had a godly mother to train him, and at eleven years of age he was assistant librarian at Folds Road School, and at twelve a teacher of the infant class. As School Secretary and in other ways he laboured for over



twenty years at Folds Road School, and then in 1868 combined with others to found Noble Street Church. With this Church he was identified the rest of his life,



ROBERT ENTWISTLE

though sickness compelled his residence at Ansdell, Lytham, and afterwards in Horwich. As a Sunday-school teacher and leader of the Improvement Class at Noble Street School he did much to cause others to develop and exercise their gifts. As a minister he was

a teacher, insisting on fundamentals. From birth an Independent Methodist he was thorough and steadfast, ever ready to defend the principles of the denomination. He, however, realised that liberty could be abused, and strongly urged a pledge that members of Churches should never take offence and never abandon the work in God's vineyard. As a member of the Connexional Committee he was a wise counsellor, and in his Church and the circuit always fostered loyalty to the Connexion. He was a member of the Bolton Town Council for three years, and an earnest advocate of the temperance cause. So long ago as 1871 he carried a resolution in the Annual Meeting urging upon all ministers and teachers and officers the duty of personal abstinence. As a friend of education, he gave valuable services as a day-school manager at Noble Street and later at Horwich. In business he was connected with the cotton trade, and after a term as yarn agent established a successful manufacturing firm under the title of Robert Entwistle and Co., quilt manufacturers, Lincoln Mill, Bolton. He was essentially a cultured man. His love of books was absorbing, and his contributions to the Magazine, describing his travels on the Continent and elsewhere, showed great literary ability. His circle of friends delighted in his company, for none came away from him uninstructed or unedified. Conversation with him always rose to a high level. He had a long illness, which he faced with indomitable will, determining to do the things which lay to his hand to the finish, when he passed peacefully away, with a humble trust in the saving grace of Christ.

## JOSEPH SETTLE

filled the office of Bookroom Secretary for the three years, 1871-4. It was in these years the first issue of our first Hymn-book was sent to the Churches, the work entailing much labour, as the writer, who was



JOSEPH SETTLE

one of his assistants, can testify. From childhood he was connected with Folds Road Church, Bolton, where his great-uncle was a preacher in 1822. He was successively teacher and school secretary, and was a member of the teachers' meeting for forty-three years. Though one of the most useful workers in the School he did not join the Church until he was thirty

years of age, and four years afterwards commenced to preach, led thereto by his prominent part in a great revival which broke out in the Church in 1878. He had a marvellous gift of speech, and he went like a flame through the Churches, many conversions taking place at the services he conducted. In 1881 he became a fully accredited minister, a position he held for twenty-five years, and he was ever welcome. For two terms he was President of the Church, and was also Church Secretary for several years. Bolton Circuit, as well as his own Church, owed much to his labours, and many remember the soul-stirring services he conducted at our Annual Meetings. For many years he was Secretary of the Bolton Sunday School Union, and in 1880 acted as organising secretary for the local Robert Raikes Centenary celebrations. In his youth he had a test to face. Being of exceptional talent, he was persuaded to become a pupil teacher, but later, when it was made plain to him that if he went to a Training College he would have to become a Wesleyan, he decided to remain with the Church of his kindred. Ultimately, for nearly fifty years he was in the service of Messrs. Barlow and Jones, Ltd., manufacturers, and was for thirty years cashier for the firm, which is a very extensive one. As a contributor to the Magazine his gift for poetry was notable, and as an interpreter of others' poetry at social gatherings he excelled. He was keenly interested in political progress and educational movements, and often spoke at great political gatherings. Indeed, he was so helpful to the Liberal Party that on two occasions he was asked to become a parliamentary candidate for his native town. Business ties prevented him, and he was also unable to accept a proffered appointment as Justice

of the Peace. In his later years he suffered much from indifferent health, and died on April 18, 1906, aged sixty-two. In a pathetic letter he left to his family he wrote: "If any one inquire, say I died ■



ALFRED ROSCOE

Christian, trusting for mercy and pardon in God and my Saviour."

**ALFRED ROSCOE**

Alfred Roscoe, who died at the age of fifty-eight, was for twenty years a prominent connexional official. From 1879 to 1883 he was Connexional Secretary, and was Vice-President in 1884 and President in 1885.

He had previously been Vice-Secretary, and from 1874-80 Bookroom Secretary. In 1887 he was Auditor, and then again from 1888 to 1891 Bookroom Secretary. From his earliest years he was attached to Folds Road School, Bolton, and became a minister at that Church in 1866; but his main labours were at Noble Street Church, where he was appointed a minister in 1871, and in later years he occupied the offices of President and Sunday School Superintendent. He was of fine presence, and had pulpit gifts of a high order. Indeed, he had the offer of a Congregational pastorate, but preferred principle to pay. All the Churches of the Connexion knew him. His life, apart from his clerical work at a foundry, was devoted to church and connexional affairs. Yet he found time for self-culture, and was widely read. He was specially zealous in persuading and helping young men to enter the ministry. In his later years he identified himself with the Bolton Free Church Council, of which he was Secretary, and was associated with the local branch of the I.B.R.A., Temperance Union and Bolton and District Sunday School Union. His end came unexpectedly. Returning from posting some Free Church Council letters he was stricken with paralysis on August 14, 1902, and was interred with many public demonstrations of respect and regret on August 31. His son Frank, who was educated for the teaching profession, took his M.A. degree at Oxford, and is now Secretary of the Teachers' Registration Council, one of the leading positions in the educational world.

#### ROBERT CUNLIFFE

gave service as Secretary in 1881. He was then an active member of Folds Road, with which he had been

connected from youth, and he is still in diligent service at this Church, although he is eighty years of age.

### DANIEL HOWARTH

was Bookroom Secretary from 1881 to 1887. He was from childhood associated with Folds Road School, Bolton, and became Superintendent of the School, and afterwards President of the Church, and in many other



DANIEL HOWARTH

capacities showed his attachment to the cause. He delighted to be the host of preachers who visited Folds Road Church. As Secretary he made much sacrifice for the Bookroom work, as he had the management of a painting and decorating business established by his father, who was one of the oldest members of the trade in the town when he died. Mr. Howarth himself became the President of the Master Painters' Association, and for six years represented East Ward, the ward in which he was born, on the Bolton Town Council. He was a much-esteemed citizen, and gave

his aid as opportunity offered to temperance and other public movements. He was one of the Bolton Circuit Trustees, and took much interest in circuit matters. In his later years he suffered from feeble health, and died in 1917 in his seventy-fourth year, leaving a widow and two sons and two daughters. His death was much lamented by Folds Road Church, to which he was extremely devoted.

#### LOUIS BOARDMAN,

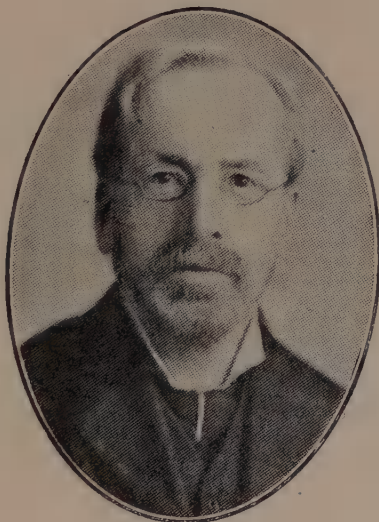
who was in early life an active member of Dicconson Lane Church, only occupied the office one year, failing health cutting his labour short. He died at the early age of thirty-two, but had won many friends and done much good work. He was a native of Westhoughton, and as a boy he worked at a colliery. At thirteen he began to assist his uncle (Richard Lee) in a restaurant at Wigan, and eventually became manager. From his earliest years he was a student, and loved to impart as well as get. He became a teacher and school worker. When twenty-two years of age he became a minister, and on his removal to Wigan gave special service to Kendal Street Church, of which he was President. He was earnest in the Christian Endeavour movement, and was President of the Wigan and District C.E. Union. For several years he also edited the Wigan Sunday School Union Magazine. He died on October 21, 1904, deeply mourned.

#### JOHN BATTERSBY

some twenty-four years ago took up his residence at Lowton and joined our Church there, he having previously been a member of the Wesleyan Church at



Leigh. He has rendered much service to Lowton Church, and also to Warrington Circuit, of which he has been treasurer for some years. As a teacher of the men's class he is much esteemed. He is also one of the day-school managers and is correspondent, his experience as a member of the Culcheth Division (Area 3)



JOHN BATTERSBY

*(Photo by Walter Scott, Bradford)*

Education Sub-Committee since its formation being very valuable. He is also a member of the Old-age Pensions and Soldiers' and Sailors' Dependents Committee for the same division. In 1911 he became Bookroom Secretary, and in that year represented the denomination, along with Richard Lee, at the Ecumenical Methodist Conference in Canada. Since his

appointment as Bookroom Secretary he has brought his business capacity to bear upon the Bookroom Department, which is now on sound lines, all orders being attended to with despatch. He has also developed the business, his voluntary service being unstinted. In other directions he has given evidence of his sterling work. When he was a member of the Leigh Board of Guardians he won the confidence of his fellow members, and in 1907 was elected Chairman of the Board, a position he held for two years. For a term he was also Chairman of the Leigh Rural District Council, which position carried with it a seat as magistrate on the County Bench. He is very well known in the district as an accountant and estate agent, and has the esteem of Churches of other denominations, who appointed him President of Leigh Free Church Council for two separate years. The photo we give was taken to form a group of Presidents of the Free Church Councils of the National Federation for the year when the Federation met at Bradford, and which was presented to the Bradford Council.

## CHAPTER XXI

### EVANGELISTS

**A**LMOST from its inception the Connexion has given attention to evangelistic effort. In 1825 a Home Missionary Society was formed, the chief objects being that Churches which were wide apart should be visited and that these and new Churches should be encouraged by preachers who could occasionally spare two or three weeks for visitation. As a safeguard, it was provided that no Church should be regularly supplied by missionaries which was within ten miles of another Church that had preachers. The Churches were to make appeals for funds and send the amount on to the Annual Meeting.

The Society did not get firmly established, but its objects were more or less kept in view. First of all, ministers were delegated by the Annual Meeting to pay a round of visits to the Churches. Next a Missionary Committee was appointed, its location being at some Church, which was responsible for evangelistic work. The result was, that Peter Phillips made several journeys; William Sanderson was often on the wing; Alexander Denovan made visitations; John Knowles again and again took an extended tour; John Parkinson, of Bradford, appears to have been very active, and so was Joseph Spencer, of Cleckheaton, and others,

including William Hardman, of Moorside, and Joseph Renshaw, of Stretford. At one period another plan was tried. Manchester Church was appointed to send preachers to visit Lymm; Warrington preachers were planned to visit Stockport; Liverpool preachers to go to Bolton; and so on. Evangelistic effort in some form or other always had attention.

In the 'forties Alexander Denovan advocated the appointment of evangelists for permanent periods, the Connexion to be responsible for their maintenance; but it was held that none should be over a month at one Church. Years went on and then, with foreboding in some quarters, at the Annual Meeting held at Oldham (Smith Street) in 1876, the following resolution was adopted, on the motion of William Brimelow:

That the General Committee be instructed to give attention forthwith to Section 10, Article IV., of the Constitution, Testimony of Union, page 13, in order that Evangelists may be sent forth from place to place to preach the Gospel and spread the truth as it is in Jesus; to raise new Churches and set them in order, and to visit as they shall be able the Churches generally, especially those that are weak.

In consequence of this decision there was a brief period of difficulty and threatened permanent secession on the part of Churches in the Liverpool District, but eventually all fell in with the evangelistic scheme, which has worked up to now. The fears of the voluntary principle being infringed have proved groundless, and none sent out by the Committee have joined the paid ministry. Those who have served as Evangelists are James Seddon, John Knowles, Joseph Birchall, Thomas Cooke, Robert Berry, Richard Lee, Matthew Kennedy, R. B. Woods, T. E. Cook, J. Hargreaves, Robert Rimmer, Sisters Green and Knight,

and A. Foreman. Sister Green and Brethren Rimmer and Foreman are still engaged in the work as they have calls and opportunity. A number of other brethren have conducted missions for limited periods.

### JAMES SEDDON

James Seddon was a quiet, sedate man. He impressed one with his serene faith, purity of life, readi-



JAMES SEDDON .

ness of access to God, lifting those about him into the presence of the Most High, a steady light and witness to Christ's redeeming grace. He was born at Liverpool on April 17, 1817, and followed his father's occupation of a shoemaker. At an early age he conse-

crated his life to Christ's service, and at twenty years of age was a local preacher amongst the Primitive Methodists. In the course of years he was resident at Bolton and other places, and in 1850 settled at Prescot. The Primitive Methodist cause had waned there, and Bro. Sanderson explained our own policy to him and persuaded him to cast in his lot with our Church. In May 1851 he was received as a minister, and in 1855 he responded to the invitation of the Annual Meeting to become an Evangelist. Commencing his labours on July 22, he visited Bolton, Wigan, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lees, Rochdale, Bury, Oldham, etc., and the record runs: "The Churches were strengthened and a number of souls brought to a saving knowledge of the truth." Then he went to live at Ashton-under-Lyne, and two years afterwards removed to Oldham, where he joined King Street Church. There he grew in esteem and usefulness, and became President of the Church and President of the Circuit. Occasionally he responded to invitations to conduct missions, one being a visit to Folds Road Church in 1872, when there were over 100 conversions, and 36 members were added to the Church. He entered into rest on May 1, 1879, having been for forty-three years a faithful minister of the Gospel. His only son has been and still is a consistent and faithful worker at King Street Church, Oldham, and is a member of the Connexional Committee.

#### JOSEPH BIRCHALL

was one of three brothers Lowton Church called out to preach the Gospel. William, the eldest, died at the age of forty-two, in 1866; John for nearly twenty-five

years was a zealous preacher of the Gospel; and Joseph, who lived until he was seventy-six, for fifty-seven years was one of our ministers. Joseph was for a time an Evangelist in Wigan and Warrington Circuits, and when circuit separate efforts were discontinued he became Connexional Evangelist in 1876. At



JOSEPH BIRCHALL

a later period he took up his residence at Leigh, and was attached to the Avenue Church. He was a powerful and impressive preacher, and the name of Birchall is one that lives in the memory of many. He died on April 11, 1909. He preached for the first time in September 1852. In an account of his first attempt at preaching he tells that his brother William was not able to take, through his wife's illness, his appoint-

ment at Heath Lane, Ashton-in-Makerfield, so he took the message and promised, if asked, to preach. He had only been converted three months, and was nineteen years of age, but felt that he ought to witness for Christ. At the request of the friends he ventured to take the service, and gave out for his text "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." But just as he had given out his text Henry Anderton, one of our ministers then, came into the service, with the result, Bro. Birchall afterwards related, "my thoughts got surrounded with an element of nebulosity," and he had finished in ten minutes, Bro. Anderton then coming to his rescue. In his young manhood Bro. Birchall was a very earnest and compelling preacher, and he was the means of much blessing. In his mature years his transparent sincerity and able exposition of the truth won his hearers. If he had any fault it was his love of sonorous words, to which his voice was suited.

#### THOMAS COOKE,

preacher and singer of the Word, was the son of Abraham Cooke, and was born at Roe Green on April 10, 1818. The family removed to Sindsley, where an Independent Methodist School was opened in 1839 and preaching services were held. He became a preacher in 1845 and met many calls. In the early 'seventies he gave considerable time to evangelistic work, and was at one period consecutively engaged, but ultimately returned to his position at Moorside mills. At Sindsley School he was successively teacher, secretary, and superintendent, and there was no warmer supporter of the temperance cause. He preached his last sermon on November 5, 1893, at Moorside, taking



for his text, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." His end came soon after-



THOMAS COOKE

wards, as he peacefully passed away on December 30, to reap the reward of the faithful.

#### ROBERT BERRY

A gracious presence, a voice of beautiful tone, a heart full of sympathy, and a spirit of buoyancy and hope were the impressions left upon those who were familiar with Robert Berry, who for years carried the evangel in our Churches. Attached to Sindsley Church, he rendered service as a Sunday-school teacher and then

as one of the ministers of the Church. Upon the invitation of the Connexional Committee he became an Evangelist in 1877 and did splendid service until 1885. It was at the Annual Meeting held at Oldham in 1876 that the writer heard him preach from the text "Thine eye shall see the King in His beauty," and was able sub-



ROBERT BERRY

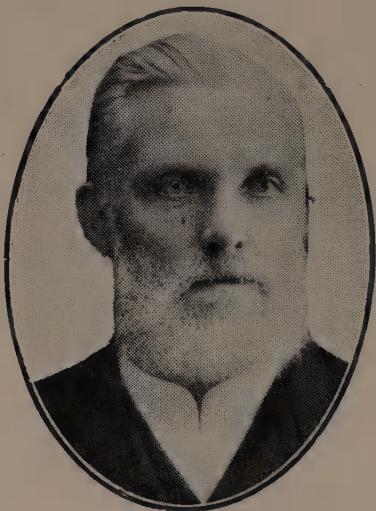
sequently to suggest him as an Evangelist. An invitation was given him by the Connexional Committee, and for eight years he did splendid service for the Churches. He first laid the foundation of Spring View Church in the Wigan Circuit, and established causes at Rochdale and Eccles, and attempted to found one in London. He journeyed to and fro throughout the Connexion, always welcome and helpful, and Smith

Street Church, Oldham, records that at one of his visitations (in 1879) that " Church reached its spiritual high-water mark, for in August the people experienced their greatest revival. Robert Berry conducted a week's mission, and his labours, and those who had prepared the way for his message, were so abundantly blessed of God that over 100 persons found their Saviour. Many of these are connected with the cause, and are working for Christ in its activities to-day." Among the Yorkshire Churches he did splendid service. He and Bro. Lee during this period were associated in evangelistic work and both retired in 1885. Bro. Berry then established a business at Moorside, and being successful was able to devote himself to public affairs. He became a member of the District Council, and was chairman for 1901-2. He was also a justice of the peace. Injuries in a trap accident somewhat marred his usefulness during the last nine years of his life. But his devotion to the Connexion was unabated, and he was at the Sunderland Annual Meeting in 1903. This was the last he attended, for after ten days' illness he died on August 25th of the same year as a result of septicæmia at the age of sixty-two. For many years he represented Manchester Circuit on the Connexional Committee, and was very helpful at one period as Secretary of the Evangelistic Committee.

#### RICHARD LEE

Richard Lee is among the stalwarts of the Connexion. Steady, plodding, ever ready, for over fifty years he has consecrated his life to the Churches. He was born on December 4, 1844, in Westhoughton, and commenced work at eight years of age in a colliery.

His education began at Wingates Sunday School ; at twelve years of age he signed the total abstinence pledge, to which he has been constant, and was converted at fifteen years of age. He was one of the founders of Dicconson Lane Church, became a minister there in 1864, and has, therefore, been on the plan



RICHARD LEE

fifty-six years. He became a Connexional Evangelist in 1878, and for six years he laboured in this service, devoting himself chiefly to the Wigan Circuit. Stubshaw Cross owes its existence to his labours, and he did much to foster the life of Spring View Church. Having ceased to be an Evangelist he commenced, in January 1885, a restaurant in Wigan, and speedily laid the foundation of a successful business. For

1893-4-5 he served as Connexional Treasurer. Then he was elected Vice-President in 1896, and for 1897-8 filled the office of President. Since then he has continued a member of the Connexional Committee, representing Wigan Circuit. In 1898 when Wigan Circuit decided to establish Kendal Street Church, he settled there and has made it his chief concern. When the new chapel was built he and his wife gave a donation of £500 to the building fund. In March 1916 they again remembered the Church at their golden wedding, when offerings to the amount of £60 were made to the Church by their many friends to commemorate the event, 300 guests being present to partake of their hospitality. At the Methodist Ecumenical Conference held in America in October, 1911, Bro. Lee was one of our representatives, and gave an address. Some years ago he visited the Holy Land, and has given many interesting addresses on his experiences during the tour. He and his wife are still amongst us and held in honour. This is his seventy-sixth year, but he is able to continue his preaching appointments.

#### MATTHEW KENNEDY

For many years Matthew Kennedy went to and fro in our Churches and left a permanent impression for good. His life is an example of how difficulties can be overcome. He was born at Newton in 1839. When only five years of age he lost his mother, and three years later his father. Having no relatives or friends, he and two other children were taken to a public institution at Warrington. There he remained for two years, and then at ten years of age became a drawer in a colliery at Aspull, living with a family of colliers.

There was no day or Sunday School in the locality, and the men were almost wholly given to drinking, dog-fighting, and other coarse amusements. In fact, he was in heathen darkness. Thus the years went on, and at eighteen years of age he went to lodge at a beer-house, and became a popular entertainer for the



MATTHEW KENNEDY

customers. But the Spirit of God arrested him, and he began to grope for the light. About this period a few silk-weavers and colliers who had removed from Westhoughton opened a Sunday School and place of worship at Dicconson Lane. He joined them in 1862, signed the total abstinence pledge, and became a teacher and a useful worker. In the same year he was converted and joined the Church. In his new-born

zeal he had prayer-meetings in the coal-pit. Then came the call to preach. He recognised his deficiencies, and at great sacrifice went on the path of self-improvement. Having a tenacious memory, he made progress, and became one of our most welcome preachers, one who was noted for his intellectual attainments. The Wigan Circuit recognised his ability, elected him President, and he was also Treasurer for a period. His interest was then enlisted in connexional affairs, and he became in succession Secretary to the Ministers' Assistance Fund, Connexional Treasurer, Vice-President, and then in 1882-3 was President of the Connexion. Meanwhile he had become a certificated colliery manager with a salary equal to £300 a year. After being thirty years in colliery life he determined to cease his connection with it. Therefore, it came about that in 1886 Bro. Kennedy accepted an invitation to become a Connexional Evangelist, and entered upon twelve years' service in that capacity. All the Churches had the benefit of his services again and again, and the spiritual results were manifold. At the 1899 Annual Meeting he was presented with a beautiful illuminated address as a recognition of the esteem in which his services were held. W. Brimelow made the presentation, and said Bro. Kennedy was an example of the product of Independent Methodism. Bro. Kennedy, in reply, said that it would be his chief effort to maintain the esteem which they had expressed. He had been away from home twelve winters, visited 12,000 working men's homes, delivered over 3,000 Gospel addresses, and spoken to over 300,000 persons, of whom 2,000 professed to be converted at these meetings. Now, in his eighty-first year, he is a minister



in Southport Circuit, and has been a resident at that seaside resort for over thirty years. He also represents the circuit on the Connexional Committee.

### RICHARD BORROWS WOODS

Richard B. Woods was one of three Evangelists who have come from Warrington Circuit. He was born in Warrington in November 1846, and his early years were spent at Friars' Green Church, of which he became a minister. In his young manhood he resided for a time at Bolton and Pendleton, still continuing his ministry and widening his influence, and then, in 1891, he became a Connexional Evangelist. His life during that period was interwoven with that of the Churches, and in a very real sense identified with them. With a zeal which never slackened, and a hopefulness that never failed, he taught, edified, and won souls for Christ. During his service as an Evangelist he preached 6,594 times, registered 7,780 decisions for Christ, and visited 54,506 families. Under his direction new Churches at Hindley, West Leigh, Ashton-on-Mersey, Blackley, Mill Lane (Leigh), Blackpool, and New Easington were opened; Churches at Morecambe, Weaste, Failsworth, and St. Mary's, Oldham, were brought into the Connexion. He kept his hand on the evangelistic plough until within a few days of his death, which occurred on October 10, 1916, when he had been fifty years in the ministry, and was in his seventieth year. All the Connexion mourned at his death, and he was truly described as "The Apostle Paul of Independent Methodism." In business he was a blacksmith, and he carried himself with a sturdiness associated with that handicraft.



Once asked by a Congregational pastor where he had graduated, his reply was "At the blacksmith's anvil." At the graveside the following tribute was paid to his character by George Hunter, who had been much in contact with him: "We commit to earth the mortal remains of our dear brother, R. B. Woods, the best



RICHARD BORROWS WOODS

known man in Independent Methodism. The word brother is the only word which will express our relationship to him. He could weep with those who weep, and what is even more difficult, he could rejoice with those who rejoice; a man with no envy or jealousy. He saw others with inferior gifts making money; he saw others with fewer gifts occupying a larger place in public life, yet he knew no envy. He saw others pro-

moted to high position in other Churches who were not so well equipped as he, yet he continued his work amongst his own people and in a small sect, and he died in the midst of the work he so much loved. He was a very well-read man, and he could converse with ease on almost any topic. His qualities were very rare, and



SISTER CLARA GREEN

he easily gained an entrance into the homes of the poor and rich alike. He was loved, and that accounts for his successful missionary work. He was a man with many executive gifts. Tactful, patient, and persevering, difficulties never awed him. He could turn to any kind of work easily. His home life was charming, as I can bear witness to, and he was always welcome

in the homes of our people. Few people knew his full name, Richard Borrows Woods. It was always R.B., and R.B. was magic to our people. Throughout his life he scattered love and helpfulness, and in his later years these things came back to him in abundant measure. He has gone to a life where activity will be rest." His wife predeceased him, and he left two sons and a daughter. The latter is now the Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary.

Sister Clara Green, the daughter of Richard Green, one of the ministers at Dicconson Lane and afterwards at Broadway Street, Oldham, whilst resident with her father in Oldham in 1905, volunteered for occasional evangelist services. She won the confidence of the people, and later agreed to give herself fully to the work. She and the late Bro. Woods were colleagues, and were welcomed to all the churches. She did splendid work, and God abundantly blessed her labour. After her father's death she was only able to give intermittent service, but is still held in esteem in the churches she has visited, and is eagerly welcomed when she is able to respond to the invitation to take evangelistic services.

Robert Rimmer, who hails from our Southport churches, but has been resident for some years in Bolton, has responded for many winters to the invitation of the Evangelistic Committee to undertake evangelistic work. He is known all over the Connexion and held in high regard.

Alfred Foreman, one of our ministers in Sunderland Circuit, is now our only Evangelist fully giving his time to the work. He has been especially successful in his efforts among the young people.

## CHAPTER XXII

### FOREIGN MISSION WORK

AT the Convention held at Haslingden, Joseph Robinson, the son of Thomas Robinson, a foremost worker at Stretford Church, challenged the Connexion to send him out as a missionary. His offer was accepted. He was then completing his studies at Manchester University, where he obtained the degree of B.Sc. From there he went to Edinburgh, and in July 1904 he qualified as M.B., Ch.B., his father meeting the expense. The same month he was united in marriage to Jessie Cook, of Dunfermline, who had obtained experience in hospital work. She had agreed to undertake missionary work with her husband, who made a round of visits to the Churches before embarking in November for India. Meanwhile, a Foreign Mission Committee had been formed with Arthur Mounfield as Chairman and J. W. Hancock as Secretary, and funds raised. It was thought advisable to labour in conjunction with the Friends' Foreign Mission Committee, who welcomed Joseph Robinson and his wife as members of their staff, we undertaking their maintenance, and also to support their medical work, which lay in Central India. They gave splendid service until 1913, when they were compelled to resign on the grounds of ill-health. Missionary effort

was continued and funds have since been raised for the Friends' Mission in India and other missionary agencies in China and Ceylon. Subsequent to his resignation Dr. Robinson was Secretary of the Foreign Mission Fund for two years, when the demands on his professional services at Stretford compelled him to



JOSEPH AND JESSIE ROBINSON

relinquish the post; but he is ever ready to give what assistance he can to the Committee. His successor as Secretary is A. Howell, of Swinton. As a minister of Stretford Church the cause has the benefit of Bro. Robinson's ministrations.

#### OUR CONNECTION WITH ROBERT MOFFATT

It is interesting to recall that, whilst a young man, Robert Moffatt (the famous African missionary) was an

under-gardener at High Legh Hall. He was converted at High Legh, one of our country mission stations near Lymm, where services were held in a dairy at Okell's farm. It was here Moffatt made his first attempt at preaching. In 1871 when in England, Moffatt paid a visit to Cheshire to speak in this meeting-place, and said: "It was here the Lord revealed Himself to my soul five-and-fifty years ago."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### FIRST MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

STRETTFORD Church has the honour of giving us our first foreign missionary, Dr. Robinson, and now is further distinguished by one of its members, Thomas Robinson, J.P., being the first Independent Methodist to be elected a Member of Parliament. They are not related to each other except in the kinship of Christian fellowship. From childhood Thomas Robinson has been connected with Stretford Church and School, and has served the latter as teacher and the former as organist. His musical abilities caused him to be chosen to co-operate with Richard Brimelow in preparing and editing our new Tune-book, on which they bestowed much skill and labour. From 1890 to 1898 he was one of the representatives of Manchester Circuit on the Connexional Committee, his most fruitful service in that capacity being given as Evangelistic Secretary. As Secretary he saw the need of the work done by Evangelists being supplemented by financial help and won the adhesion of his co-workers and the Churches to the establishment of the Extension Fund. It would have gladdened his heart if £5,000 had been obtained, but over £4,000 now stands to its credit, and the yearly income from this sum has enabled a number of missions to be initiated and subsequently

aided and strengthened. Through the controversy on the Corporate Trustee matter the contributions to Home Mission funds temporarily fell off, and he (it was done anonymously) made a challenge to the Annual Meeting in 1910 that if a special fund of £500 was raised he would contribute £100. Bro. R. Lee and his wife followed with another £100. The chal-



SIR THOMAS ROBINSON, M.P.

lenge was taken up, and next day the total aimed at was enlarged, as Bro. Robinson obtained a promise from his friend, R. Foulds, to also give £100. Subscriptions came in freely, with the result that the debts on the Mission and Connexional Expenses Fund were wiped out, and a balance left which has formed the nucleus of the Reduction of Debt Fund inaugurated at the 1918 Annual Meeting.

Bro. Robinson, as Chairman of the Liberal Associa-



tion for the division, is well known, and his broad-minded views on questions of public welfare are shared by his fellow citizens. Some years ago he was made a Justice of the Peace, his judicial ability being speedily recognised by his fellow justices. In business, which was formerly that of yarn agent, he has risen to a position of great responsibility, having been for several years a managing director of the Bradford Dyers' Association. As Mr. Robinson may be considered in the full prime of life, with matured powers of administration, we may look forward to him doing more signal service as a parliamentary representative of the people. While not aspiring to be an orator, his public utterances are lucid and forceful and compel attention, especially from those who take an intelligent interest in present-day problems. In appreciation of his public services he has now been knighted, being the first Independent Methodist to have that title.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT: PIONEER ABSTINENCE SOCIETY

OUR Connexional Editor (A. Mounfield) has been at some pains to make clear the fact that before the famous movement of Joseph Livesey, or "The Seven Men of Preston," the total abstinence pledge was the basis of a society at Stockton Heath Chapel, Warrington, in 1830. Joseph Livesey knew of it, and in August 1831 he took the pledge and began the famous Preston movement which has made his name famous through the English-speaking world. The roll-book of the Stockton Heath Society makes it clear that this first total abstinence society was almost entirely composed of members of Stockton Heath Church. Stockton Heath influenced Friars' Green Church, which became closely associated with the abstinence movement, and Joseph Livesey, in an address at Friars' Green, won the whole-hearted adhesion of Peter Phillips.

In his memoir of Henry Anderton, Edward Grubb says: "Next to the cockpit at Preston the old Friars' Green Chapel deserves to be associated with his name as one of the places where he displayed that mighty eloquence that touched all hearts and filled every eye." The first Band of Hope, or "The Youths'

Total Abstinence Society," on the basis of entire abstinence, was formed at our school in Brick Street on May 1, 1835. Arthur Mounfield writes: "Those were stirring days. The Friars' Green building was the only one for miles round in which temperance meetings could be held, and in view of the scenes which occurred it is small wonder that others were not offered. Infuriated dupes, hired by publicans to disturb the meetings, handed round jugs and even buckets of beer to show contempt for the speakers." Our other Churches in Lancashire readily opened their doors to temperance speakers, and our denomination, from the initiation of the temperance movement, has been closely identified with it. It was not then fashionable among the Wesleyans to be abstainers, but they have ranked with us now in earnestness on this social reform.



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